This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

Case *Shelf*

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

LIBRARY

OF THE

PEABODY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ARCHÆOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

GIFT OF

LOMBARD C. JONES

(A.B. 1887, M.D. 1890)

FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

Received December 7, 1919

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

E. F. Hemingway.

MAORIA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MAORIA.

A SKETCH OF THE

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF NEW ZEALAND.

BY

CAPTAIN J. C. JOHNSTONE,

BENGAL ARMY.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1874.

175 ~ 1

Digitized by Google

OC. POLY. J 65
Q. of Lambeth Palace
Dec 7.1919

PRINTED BY
TAYLOR AND CO., LITTLE QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

Digitized by Google

To Mrs. Graham Johnstone.

Time and distance have not with you, my dear sister, effected their usual work, and caused you to forget the absent. Let me, therefore, as a slight mark of my appreciation of your many acts of affectionate kindness, dedicate to you this little "Maori sketch," written at your suggestion.

Your Affectionate Brother,

J. C. JOHNSTONE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

A SCORE of books illustrate the life of the North American Indian; but few or none have hitherto attempted to draw the Maori, a far higher order of uncivilized man. Perhaps the principal reason which has "tapued" Maoria to the writer of fiction is the difficulty of depicting a Maori heroine, or of painting an effective picture of a Maori love affair. The demarcation between the two sexes was in old times so strict, that courtship was carried on entirely by a system of glances—an alphabet sufficient, no doubt, for the language of love, but not at all adapted to the purposes of the novelist.

When it was suggested to the author to try his hand at "a Maori story," he fully realized this difficulty; but he ventured to think that a description, however slight, of the ancient customs of the island—an attempt, however humble, to put on record the rare military qualities that for so long a period enabled a few handfuls of half-

Digitized by Google

armed barbarians to resist the dominion of the white man, might prove to possess some little interest, due rather to the subject than to the merits of the writer.

The Maori race is fast disappearing; when the last of them has followed his ancestors to Te Reigna, all who were acquainted with them, before their so-called civilization, will probably have likewise passed away. The author has spent many years in New Zealand, and knows what the Maori once was, and what he is now. The associations of these years make it a pleasant task for him to render, before it is too late, his testimony, trifling as it may be, to the truth, honour, generosity, hospitality, and virtue which distinguished the inhabitants of Maoria before the advent of the Pakeha. With the Bible in one hand and the rum bottle in the other, we flattered ourselves that we had, in a few years, christianized and civilized the owners of the broad lands we had appropriated. But our presumption has been heavily rebuked, for the race has morally and physically deteriorated in the attempt, and promises to become extinct in the process. Thousands have dwindled down to hundreds, hundreds to tens, and the Maori of to-day is too often a drunkard, a liar, a thief, and a perjurer.

Nor, on the other hand, does he hold a high estimate of his white brother and his artificial civilization. Of the latter he says, "It's God is Gold;" and, in his secret

Digitized by Google

heart, he thinks that we are marching on to his annihilation with religion on our tongues and chicanery in our hearts.

Yet from him the author has received many an act of kindness, and he trusts that he has done justice to a brave race, and honestly described them as they were when they lived and died under their own laws and customs.

These few pages make no pretence to the character of a work of fiction. The traditions they describe are Maori traditions; the characters are real characters; and most of the incidents occurred under the observation of the author, or were related to him by the descendants of those who were present when they took place.

Yet another generation and the fair plains of New Zealand will have seen the last of the Maori. He was ignorant, superstitious, and cruel; but he was truthful, brave, and, according to his lights, honourable. He defended himself against foreign conquest and oppression with rare courage and skill; and the secret of his long and effective resistance to superior numbers might advantageously be studied and laid to heart in the home of his conquerors. That secret was his ready and willing obedience to the fundamental rule of Maori society, which taught that the first duty of every citizen is to be prepared to bear arms in behalf of the

Digitized by Google

commonwealth; and that far beyond the selfish luxury of the rich man, or the petty greed of the trader, is the simple patriotism which is ready to fight, and, if necessary, to die, in defence of its country.

Te Haroto,
Auckland, New Zealand.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Ngutukaka. *Hangis* or Native Ovens. The Waitebuna River. The Snare. Frost-fish. Sperm Whales. Dense Vegetation. Kauroa. Native Fortifications. Interior of a Pa. A "Guest House." Construction of the Native Dwellings. Cooking Houses. The *Kahawai.* Native Good Temper. Maori Maidens. Childbirth Customs. A Native Beauty. Tattooing. Maori Costume. . 1

CHAPTER II.

Female Labour. Maiden Freedom. Fishing Canoes. The Tohunga. "A Lazy Fellow." "Making Faces." A Delicate Duel. A Maori Séance. A Spirit Voice. *Karakia.* Wooden Swords. Early Marriage. Polygamy. A *Mataika.* A Maori *Table d'hôte.* A *Manuka* Spear. Grotesque Carvings. The Fortress of Ngutukaka. Its defences. Universal Industry. Preparation of Fern Root. A Magic Grove. A Primitive Incantation. . 19

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

PAGE

Maori Traditions. The Cradle of the Race. The Immortal Fleet. Maori Powers of Memory. Primitive Society in Hawaiki. Discovery of Intoxicating Drinks. Their Effects. General Debauch. Papuan Dances. Origin of the *Runanga*. Internecine Dissensions. Proposed Emigration. Sailing of the Ten Canoes. Their Contents. Arrival in Maoria. Subjugation of the Aborigines. Tribal Government. Policy of the Immigrants. Female Education. "A Choice Man." "A Fine Woman." Maori Superstitions. Demons. Witchcraft. "Te Reigna." Cannibalism. 39

CHAPTER IV.

The Ariki of the Ngatiroa. His Career. His Administration of Justice. A Maori Divorce. A Vision. Presentiments. The Ariki's Successor. Intrigues. The War Chief. A Lucky Warrior. The Reward of Bravery. A Sinecure. Fish Tides. A Flaw in an Escutcheon. Fishing Nets. A System of Exchanges. *Utu* Payments. A Council. An Insidious Allusion. The Battle of Waipuna. A Foray. A Night Attack. Prisoners of War. Rival Proposals. Te Wira's Modesty. Karaka's Decision. Te Au's Successor. Triumph of the Tohunga. Discomfiture of Ruia. Moni's Troubles. An Impertinent Suicide. Dark rumours. 52

CHAPTER V.

The Ariki's Death. Preparations for the Event. A Dying Speech. A Last Prophecy. Lying in State.

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Concourse of Mourners. The *Moa.* The Tribe of the Rarawa. Arrival of a Deputation. Its Reception. A War Dance. Rubbing Noses. Interment of the Ariki. An Aboriginal Settlement. Pihoe's Confession. Capital Punishment. A Large Present. Slaves. Servile Septs. Departure of the Mourners. Renewal of Toil. Keia's Return. An Eel Story. Keia's Front Tooth. A large Appetite. Ora Loses her Temper. The Tohunga Makes an Excursion. *Pipis.* River Islets. Tapued Ground. Diving for Eels. A Fatal Accident. A *Taniwha.* A *Rahui.* Necessity of Fat. Eel Weirs. A Mullet Trap. An Impending Duel. . . . 76

CHAPTER VI.

The Ordeal of Single Combat. Damages. Woman the Source of all Mischief. Trespass. Uselessness of Excuses. Absence of Insulting Language. Duelling. Its Advantages. Preparations for the Conflict. Its Cause. Parade of the Rival Tribes. An Injured Husband. Cowardice of the Aggressor. Tiari's Interference. A Confession. A Scientific Encounter. First Blood. Tiari's Victory, *Muru.* Reciprocal Presents. A Canoe and an Old Harridan. . . 103

CHAPTER VII.

Supplies of Timber. The *Taro* of Hawaiki. The Cocoa Tree of Oceania. The Buffalo of North America. The *Kumira* of New Zealand. Preparation of Fern Root. Hankering after Relishes. A ThreeYears' Job. A

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Raft Aground. A Drought. An Application to the Tohunga. An Incantation. The Spirit's Reply. A Second Invocation. An Enigmatical Answer. Ngawhare's Magic Chant. A Peal of Thunder. "The Sound of the Trumpet." A Waif. Lost in the Forest. A Lunatic's Story. Hairy Giants. A Mad Song. The Roses and Thorns of Matrimony. Taipari's Love. A *Tawa Tango*. Ngawhare's Plan. An Eccentric Ambassadress. Ngawhare's Cunning. An Ambushed Raiding Party. A Ruse. An Abduction. A Struggle for the Bride. The Keeper of the Eel Weir. Killed by Witchcraft. The Evil Eye. A Father's Revenge. Death of the Sorcerers. Verdict of Society. . . 116

CHAPTER VIII.

Changes in Nature and in Man. Ahana. Its Countless Sea Birds. An Expedition to their Haunts. Their Rocky Home. Seal Hunting. An Embassy from the Rarawa. A Rival Tohunga. Jealousy of Ngawhare. Overtures of the Ambassadors. The Tohunga Decides against Them. Te Wira's Attempt to Protect Them. Ngawhare's Intrigues. His Success. The two Tohungas. Turtle Soup. Maori Secrecy. Return of the Fleet from Ahana. The Impending Fate of the Rarawa Envoys. Karaka's Regrets. His Reluctant Consent. State Reception of the Ambassadors. A Maori Bull's Head. The Lifting of the Covers. The Signal of Death. Massacre of the Rarawa. "I Save my Relation." "New Zealand Heads." Preparations for War. Scouts. Their Duties and Dangers.

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Arming of the Rarawa. The Scene of the Coming Struggle. Karaka's Plan. Departure of the Expedition. An Ambush. Caught in the Toils. Defeat of the Rarawa. Matuku's Bravery. Karaka's Wound. The *coup de grace.* The Ariki of the Rarawa. A Monster. Burial of the Dead. Orgies of the Battle Field. 136

CHAPTER IX.

The Ariki of the Rarawa. Willing to Die. The Taniwha Disappears in the Ocean. The Return to Ngutukaka. Reception of the Victors. A Surprising Likeness. Karaka's Youthful Indiscretions. Matuku claims a fair Reward. Father and Son. Karaka's Internal Conflict. The Father or the Ruler. The Father Conquers. Betrothal of Tui. Marriage of Hira. A Betrothed's Privileges. Coy Husbands. A Display of Virtue. The Rarawa again Assemble. Karaka's Wound proves Mortal. His Impending Death. His Advice to his Brother. The Last Address to the Tribe. Dying Words. "Beware of the Sea!" Death. . . . 163

CHAPTER X.

Preparations for Defence. Ngutukaka Made Ready for a Siege. Advance of the Rarawa. Their Taunts. Silence of the Garrison. Preparations of the Besiegers. A Fiery Sortie. Dismay of the Rarawa. Exultation of the Ngatiroa. Perseverance of the Enemy. Sickness among the Garrison. Removal of the *Tapu.* Sallies of the Besieged. Interference of the Mania-

Digitized by Google

PAGE

where. Last Effort of the Rarawa. An Inflammable Fascine. Its Failure. Retreat of the Rarawa. Joy in Ngutukaka. Ngawhare Consults the Stars. His Presentiments. A Cloudy Morning. The Fog Lifts. A Whale in the Snare. A Rush to Seize It. A Doubtful Prize. A Surprise. Destruction and Death. Cunning of the Rarawa. The Death Trap. Tuj's Bridal Shawl. A Lover's Devotion. Shawl and Shroud. The Tapu Grove. The Precipice. The Leap of Death. The Tohunga on the Edge of the Abyss. His Hesitation. His Prophecy. The Victors Interrupt Him. The End. 174

Notes 191

Digitized by Google

MAORIA.

CHAPTER I.

NOWHERE did the shores of the Great Sea, as the natives of the thousand isles of the Pacific call that boundless ocean, display a more cheerful scene than that exhibited at Ngutukaka on the morning of the opening of our story. It was the first day of the *kahawai* fishing. To the Maoris of the coast the produce of the sea was always of more importance than that of the land; and this year weeks of unseasonable winds had delayed the commencement of the fishing season, and the stores of dried fish were nearly exhausted. But the *kowhai* now shone resplendent in its yellow blossoms; the cuckoo, the bird of Hawaiki had arrived upon its flitting visit; the winter, with its eternal rain and frost, had finally taken its departure; the anxiously expected shoals of the *kahawai* were darkening the waters of the bay; and the sea was ready again to furnish to the simple islanders their choicest food.

Digitized by Google

Plain as is the cuisine of Maoria, fern root without a *kinaki,* or relish, is but poor fare, and all joyfully welcomed the return of spring, fish, and plenty. In honor of the day the last pit of *kumiras,* sweet potatoes, had been opened, and more rows of *hangis,* were alight in the cooking-houses than had been heated for many weeks. The *hangi* is merely a saucer-shaped hole in the ground, two or three feet in width and about one in depth. A liberal supply of firewood is placed at the bottom of this hole and lighted; a quantity of stones are piled on the burning wood, and when they have become red hot, the unburnt portion of the wood is raked out and water thrown upon the stones. The Maori cooks then place flax-matting, which they always wash before and after use, upon the hot stones; more water is thrown in, the food—whether meat, fish, or vegetables—is placed in the oven, covered up with a second layer of matting or leaves, and earth is thrown upon the top of the whole until steam ceases to escape.

By long habit the women, who are the presiding spirits of the oven, know to a minute when the food is done; and pork, potatoes, and silver eels, cooked in this fashion, are as palatable as when dressed in any of the hundred ways it has entered the minds of cooks to conceive.

While the *hangis* are getting sufficiently heated to receive the contents of the large baskets of freshly-washed *kumiras* that lie around them, we will take a glance at the surrounding scene.

Digitized by Google

The background is occupied by the fortress of Ngutukaka (the parrots' bill), so called from its outline presenting some fancied resemblance to the upper mandible of a parrot. The Waitebuna, rising in the inland hills, and taking a westward course through the mountain-chain that crosses the island, washes the foot of the fortress, and pours itself into the sea a little further on. Downwards from the mountain-gorge it flows, the last waters of the winter floods lending a volume and an impetuosity to its course that the approaching heats of summer will soon effectually diminish, if not entirely destroy. Here and there, islands, covered with trees of tropical luxuriance, divide the stream, and add beauty to its course. At their edges, the dark-green boughs of the umbrageous *puriri* bend down and dip into the flood; while, towards their centre, reeds and rank grass struggle for possession with the wiry *wiwi* rush, which loves the brackish water. Near the sea, the south or left bank of the river forms a rich alluvial flat, through which flows a tributary to the main stream, the Mohaka. At their junction stands the fishing-village of Kauroa, which may be described as the port of the main settlement of Ngutukaka. At the mouth of the Waitebuna, and for some miles north and south of it, the sands of the beach are very extensive; the tidal limit being marked by a long thin line of trees and bushes, brought down by the floods as their tribute to the sea, and contemptuously thrown back by the latter's waves on the land. The northern shore is named by the Maoris

Digitized by Google

"Whare Mahanga," the Snare, and is, indeed, a gigantic trap of nature's construction, The tides which wash around the island, form, as they meet the masses of water which issue from the mouth of Waitebuna, an eddy at the northern angle of the shore and river, which attracts and holds fast all waifs and strays that drift within its reach from seaward and northward.

Many a weary journey to the inland hills for firewood the snare spared the women of Kauroa. All through the winter, trees and bushes, brought down by the floods, would be found stranded on its beach in the early morning; and often a canoe, washed from its moorings, would drift down the river, and run ashore at Whare Mahanga; and, when the easterly winds of spring prevailed, with their world-wide accompaniments of fog and rheum, the sands of the snare provided quantities of the delicious *para*, or frost fish, at other times so difficult to catch, but now helplessly entangled in the back waters of the eddy, to punish them, as the Maoris said, for being proof against both net and line.

The greatest quarry however, which fell into the ever-open trap, was the sperm-whale; sometimes simply caught in the treacherous undertow, sometimes wounded in battle by its enemy the thrasher, and drifting in shore to die; sometimes making choice, if a female about to calve, of the quiet sands of the snare, forgetful in her anxiety as to her maternal duties, of her own safety, the elephant of the ocean, once caught in the eddies of the snare, soon fell a prey to

Digitized by Google

the lances of the Maoris. When such a rare take was found on the sands of Whare Mahanga, there was great rejoicing; for a single whale not only furnished food and oil for many weeks' consumption, but out of its ribs the natives made their *haeraes*, or whalebone swords, one of their most effectual weapons of offence or defence.

Unfortunately, however, a whale was an infrequent prize. Few of the watchers of the snare were able, more than twice or thrice in their lives, to raise the welcome shout of "*He ika moana*," "the fish of the great sea."

Turning the gaze from the sands, and bending it upon the river and its surrounding landscape, the eye is struck by the contrast in brightness of colour presented by the light blue of the sky and water, and the sombre green of the vegetation. In the far distance, the interminable forests with which the mountain-chains are covered; in the centre, the fern-clad ridges; and in the foreground, the rank vegetation of the swamp, are all tinged with the same dull hue. The only relief to the picture is here and there the lighter green of the flax-fields. Prominent on the summits of the intermediate ranges, may be observed the huge *rata*, which commences life as a creeper and develops into the leviathan of the forest; and from their sides, pines, whose timber is of unrivalled excellence, shoot up branchless in gaunt and lofty rigidity.

But dense as the forests, fern ridges, and swamps appeared to the eye—nothing conveyed even an approx-

Digitized by Google

imate idea of their real impenetrability. The undergrowth everywhere was more than tropical in luxuriance; gigantic creepers ran from tree to tree, and canes trailed not only along the ground, but interlaced each other, net-like, between the branches.

The modest-looking fern, which everywhere covered the dry land that was not forest-clad, upon close acquaintance proved to be nearly as impenetrable as the woods themselves. Of gigantic height, and intertwined with its favourite companions, the *tutu* and *koromiko* shrubs, it presented to the would-be explorer a tangle of vegetation that it might be possible to pass over, but certainly not to pass through, unless, indeed, he were an eel or a naked Maori.

Kauroa, the port and principal suburb, was little more than a mile from the great fortress by which it was protected. Every village in Maoria was fortified, and Kauroa was no exception to the rule. The near presence of the great Pa would have been no protection to an unfortified village against the enterprises of a daring enemy. Still, as the fortifications were only intended to guard against a surprise or sudden onslaught, they were not elaborate. The outer defence was a ditch, a few feet in depth and width, at the inner edge of which stood a *chevaux de frise* of split trunks, succeeded by another ditch, upon the brink of which was built the real defence of the Pa; a stockade of from fourteen to sixteen feet in height, lashed and joined together at about ten feet from the ground by very long cross-pieces, Many of the upright trunks were from

Digitized by Google

one to three feet in width, wrought down to a few inches in thickness, and at the top carved into the most hideous and grotesque likenesses of men ever conceived by sculptor. The heads of the images were as large as their bodies, and their tongues, which were invariably thrust out of their mouths, were about the size of their forearms.

A third palisade, some fourteen feet from the middle and main defence, completed the fortifications.

This description may be taken as that of the ordinary defences of a village built upon level, or nearly level ground; but, whenever it was possible, the Maori engineers took advantage of the numerous round volcanic hills of the country upon which to construct their defences. Frequently seven and eight tiers of palisading rose, one above the other, upon the hills, which the natives with indomitable energy terraced and scarped with their wooden spades. To return to Kauroa, "the great mouth," as its principal entrance was termed, was upon the eastern side, facing the Mohaka; on the northern side was a smaller postern gate. The timbers for closing these entrances were ever at hand, and a few minutes sufficed to fix them in their places. The Pa was nearly square, and enclosed an area of about five acres. When first built, a clear space had been preserved within the inner palisade; but a feeling of security had caused this space to be encroached upon, and now there were houses built close up to the defences. These, however, upon the slightest apprehension of an attack, could be, with

Digitized by Google

little trouble, rapidly cleared away. There was no unoccupied space now within the Pa; indeed, so great were the attractions of the water-side, that it required the full authority of the principal chiefs to prevent its enlargement, or the erection of another Pa in its vicinity, to the injury of the great tribal fortress.

The principal street led from the gateway to the centre of the village, where stood its far most imposing building, dignified by the name of "the strangers', or guest house."

This house, or hall, as its comparatively large dimensions entitled it to be called, so far from being exclusively appropriated to the purpose it had been designed for, was in daily use by the principal chiefs of the settlement. Even in Maoria, greatness had its drawbacks, from which the public at large was exempt. Anything so common as food must upon no consideration enter the house of a chief. Eating in the open air, in a damp climate, being frequently unpleasant, it became an object to reside in the vicinity of the guest-house, to which a large share of the best food was sent every day. Every morning the hall was swept clean and spread with fresh rushes, ready for the visitors who might possibly arrive; and its walls and roofs, being lined with the flower-stalks of the great *toe-toe* grass, neatly sewn together, presented a fresh and pleasing appearance.

Most of the other houses were detached; upon their frameworks were lashed long sticks, a few inches apart; to these were tightly fastened bundles of *raupo*, a

Digitized by Google

species of bulrush, beaten flat as they were fixed, making walls, wind and water proof, cool in summer, warm in winter, and of such regularity that they appeared, at a short distance, to be constructed of sawn timber. The leaves of the *toe-toe* plant, from which were taken the reeds for lining the houses, also furnished most of the thatches; but their sharp edges being unpleasant to handle, some of the dwellings were roofed with the long *wiwi* rush, which, as has been said, grows in brackish waters.

Detached on the northern side, near the postern-gate, were "the houses for cooking food," as the Maoris termed their kitchens. Their walls were built of the stems of the fern-tree, which do not readily ignite, and which allow the smoke to escape between the interstices of their ill-fitting logs. The western side was occupied by storehouses. Some of these contained, or had contained, dried fish; others, immense stores of dried fern-root, and pits, carefully protected with impervious roofs of beaten clay, constructed to hold their winter stock of sweet potatoes.

All this time the Moschetto fleet of canoes, fully two hundred in number, were fishing in the waters of the bay; some, indeed, taking advantage of the flood-tide, had pushed past the bar up the estuary, and were plying their lines hard by the esplanade in front of Kauroa. The *kahawai*, which resembles, but is usually twice or thrice as large as the mackarel, like that fish, is best taken by a moving bait, and the occupant of each canoe vigorously plied his paddles while trailing

Digitized by Google

over his skiff's stern the glittering *passa*-shell with its accompanying brass hook, the Maori substitute for our more elaborate angling apparatus. The little flotilla on the water, and the numerous groups upon the beach and shore, lent much animation to the scene. Old age, middle age, and childhood were all well represented, though on the shore the first and last were considerably in the majority. The youngster just able to walk alone, and who, reed in hand, was receiving from some more veteran baby his first lesson in the spear exercise; the old man, who had nearly run his course, and who, quickened for the moment by the warm spring sun, held open his dim and closing eyes while he peered, with passing pleasure, on the stir and life around him; the men and women, old too, but not yet past all labour, who drank in the sunshine while they carved a weapon, scraped a paddle, or rubbed a piece of green jade with sandstone—the tiresome process by which, literally, in the course of years, their weapons, tools, and instruments were fashioned—were each and all, whatever their apparent occupation, engrossed in reality with the thought that the *kahawai* were come at last, and that, for a season at least, they had bidden adieu to the long monotony of the fishless, flavourless *kumiras*. Most of the younger women were busy with the leaves of the flax-plant, scraping them for flax, weaving them into garments, cutting them into strips or strings for the purpose of making into fishing-nets, or twining them into the food-baskets so largely used at every meal,

Digitized by Google

and invariably thrown away after being once used. In the background knots of older boys were practising the three R's of Maori education—running, wrestling, and reed throwing.

Animated as all these groups were, not a hasty exclamation, not a quarrelsome sound, was to be heard. Discord was unknown at Ngutukaka. Days, weeks, and months passed without an angry word being spoken, without an oath being uttered; indeed, the Maori language was almost absolutely destitute of profane terms—the sole curse it contained being such an awful one that it was only applied to a public enemy, or those about to become so; and its use was almost invariably a sign of immediate war.

Standing on the land above the landing-place, Te Alis Ora, Tui, and Hira, cousins, and granddaughters of a famous old warrior, Te Au O Te Rangi, the Ariki, or head chief of the tribe, added to the scene the only additional charm Maoria could bestow, the presence of the fairest of its daughters. Te Alis Ora, who stood upon the right of the group, was the daughter of Tomo, the third and youngest son of Te Au.—We must adopt the island practice of abbreviating people's names; the Maoris rarely spoke of or addressed a person by his or her full name: to have done so would have been inconvenient, as the same person had frequently as many names as a European scion of Royalty; and sometimes the beginning, sometimes the end of a name was dropped.—Ora had experienced

Digitized by Google

the greatest misfortune that can befall an infant; at her birth she had lost her mother, a lady of high birth of the Ngatipoa Tribe on the East Coast. Maori women believed childbirth to be invested with such mystery, secrecy, and delicacy, that it was incumbent on an expectant mother to retire to some sheltered spot, which under no circumstances might be under a roof, and there in solitude give birth to her offspring. The presence of women, if not considered indelicate, was considered unlucky, and presaging misfortune to the mother or to her infant. Anything so monstrous as the presence of a man it never entered into the mind of these people to conceive possible. In accordance with this custom, Ora's mother on the eventful day left her house and entered the forest, but as she failed to return, the anxious matrons of the tribe proceeded in search of her, and found her lying exhausted with her child in her arms. They carried her back to her home, but she expired towards evening; such an untoward event being of exceedingly rare occurrence. The life of the infant was with great difficulty preserved. It could not be put to the breast of a slave, and no woman of equal rank with the deceased would consent to entirely sacrifice the interests of her own child. The little girl had therefore half a dozen foster mothers, but managed to escape being killed by kindness, and scrambled into childhood, acquiring her name from the circumstances attending her birth and infancy. She grew up a strange, silent, wayward girl, fond of watching her companions at work, but never offering to

Digitized by Google

assist in it. Had she not been of high birth, a great lady in the land, it had not fared well with her amongst a people every man and woman of whom believed in labour. As it was, the fact of her mother having belonged to another tribe, and the circumstances attending her birth, ensured her being left at liberty to dream away her life. The busy scene now before her lent unusual animation to her large sleepy eyes. But for her clear brown skin and fine curly hair she might have been supposed, from her lips and nose, to have possessed a taint of African blood; possibly indeed from her mother's side she inherited a strain of the Papuan aborigines who inhabited the Island at the time of the immigration of the Maoris from Hawaiki. Her dress was not only becoming, but even rich; she was clad in an ample cloak, a present from the distant island of Kapiti, ornamented with quantities of *kiwi* feathers, closely worked in rows upon the exterior, and fastened on the right side, leaving the right arm and neck uncovered. As an earring and protecting charm she wore a strange little green stone image, and in her hair she had the beautiful feathers of the *puia*. Her faultless arm extended, she was calling the attention of her companions to some incident which had attracted her attention. From the shoulder to the elbow, indicated by a dimple, the limb was round as a sapling; from the dimple to the wrist it tapered, unblemished by vein or muscle; and her small plump hand, slender fingers, and well-kept nails told the tale of her indolent life. The infinitesimal tattooing upon the corner of her lip

Digitized by Google

enabled the spectator to make acquaintance with this unaccountable custom without the shock to his feelings which might be caused at the sight of fully-tattooed female lips and chin. Ora's tattooing had been taken in a homœopathic dose. The artist had commenced on the inner surface of the lip, but when he had completed his minute lines as far as the centre, the young lady had refused to give him further sittings, being blessed with one of those constitutions so exquisitely sensitive to pain as to shrink from undergoing what would have been of but little inconvenience to those formed of stronger clay. In a family of healthy children there is sometimes one more sensitive to heat, cold, and pain than the others; this greater delicacy of nerve is frequently compensated by a greater degree of intelligence than that of the other children, and under favourable circumstances occasionally developes into one of Nature's great gifts, poetry, oratory, painting, or music. Some suffer more in taking a dose of medicine than others in undergoing an operation, and many can have a tooth drawn or swallow the most nauseous drug in the pharmacopœia without wincing. The dark blue mark upon Ora's vermilion lip had the effect of heightening the contrast of colour in a far more pleasing manner than if the artist had been allowed to perfect his design, and the additional tint was no more objectionable than the "beauty spots" by which European ladies added to their charms a century after the date of our story. The girls remained standing on the bank, enjoying the sport, and taking a share in the

Digitized by Google

jokes which passed between the fishermen and the women at the landing-place; joining in the applause which rewarded successful casts of the line, or in the ridicule which befel those who had entangled their lines, or who had lost a fish already hooked, a frequent occurrence, as the *kahawai* is soft mouthed.

Tui, the centre of the group, was the only child of Te Rangi Oha, the eldest child and only daughter of Te Au, of whom Tui was the favourite grandchild. Eighteen summers had scarcely matured her form, although she had attained a stature rare among her countrywomen. She had a straight nose, always the distinctive mark of Maori blue blood, fine teeth, and lips slightly betraying her Polynesian origin; but in these things she differed little from most of "her sisters," as not only her two companions would have called themselves, but many more of those present; for the name of sister was bestowed, not only on real sisters and first cousins, but on cousins so many times removed that no one but a native genealogist could have traced the connection.

In two gifts Tui had the advantage not only of her companions but of all the maidens of the Great River, in her voice, and in her hair. Her soft black hair curled so closely down her neck that the length of her tresses was not perceived, unless when she was at play with her companions, flying round by the ropes of the circular swing, or when swimming, they floated far behind her. Their friendly shelter over her brows had protected the natural fairness of her skin and the pale

Digitized by Google

nooks at the temples showed that her face was rather browned by the sun than naturally dark. Her great, her unrivalled charm, however, was her voice. Amongst a race since celebrated for the softness of its women's voices, none had so musical a tone; hence her name of the *Tui*, the bird, which, in a country whose birds are almost all tuneless, is doubly honoured as the songster who ushers in the dawn. Many a youth of the tribe, intoxicated by the sound of Tui's voice, nightly dreamed that he heard her sweet accents, or her musical laugh; but to none had she turned the downcast look by which a Maori maiden looks assent; and while all loved in her a beautiful, sprightly, industrious girl, none could boast of having received the slightest encouragement. She was at once the idol of the young and of the aged; and many an old dame, close upon the century, made herself happy by quoting Tui as the living image of what she herself had been in the days of her youth.

It was not an every-day occurrence for Tui to be dressed in a *kaitaka* shawl, such as now adorned her, and which in appearance and value presented a greater contrast to her usual *pureki*, than does the cashmere of a millionnaire's wife to the tartan scarf of a Scotch servant girl.

The rough *pureki*, two of which were commonly worn, the one round the waist and the other as a cloak over the shoulders, when seen upon the men in the canoes which boarded the first vessels that visited the Island, was not inappropriately called "a mat," and the ugly name came to be applied to every description

Digitized by Google

of garment worn by the Maoris. Of these there were more than forty different kinds—shawls, cloaks, and mats, woven of a variety of materials, flax, skins, feathers, *ti* roots, etc.; and some of them, such as the *tapona* or war cloak, were thick and impenetrable enough to turn the point of a spear. The splendid *kaitaka* shawl worn by Tui was the manufacture of her own hands, the result of the past winter's work. The staple of the shawl was the finest *ngaro* flax, scraped, beaten, and washed until it resembled silk in texture and appearance; a portion of it was dyed black, and worked in a small diamond-shaped pattern, while the fringe surrounding it was made of the long white hair of the dog, the solitary domestic animal brought from Hawaiki. Many willing hands had assisted in manipulating the rough materials of the shawl. Cutting the leaves, scraping, beating, washing, and hackling could be performed by unskilled labour, and had been the work of her companions; but the actual weaving, if such a term may be applied to laying the prepared flax in minute lines, and crossing each line, at intervals of half an inch, by other fine twisted threads with such precision, that, when finished, the shawl presented as regular an appearance as the web from a loom, was a work very few of the young women of the tribe could execute.

Hira stood with her right arm round her cousin Tui's neck, half hidden among its long curls. She was a daughter of Karaka, the second son of Te Au O Te Rangi. She wore the primitive every-day working

Digitized by Google

dress in which by far the greater number of those present were clad, or perhaps we should say, unclad. The *pureki* mat was smooth upon the inside; on the outside, rows of twisted flax, which had been only partially scraped, were worked in, so as to overlay one another, and gave a very rough appearance to the garment, which was quite rain proof. Occasionally two, as we have before remarked, were worn, the one round the shoulders, and the other round the waist, and they were of all sizes and shapes. Not the slightest idea of indelicacy was attached to women appearing so scantily clad, and this being the case, in point of fact there was none. Of this opinion certainly was Hira, whose *pureki* amply displayed her unadorned charms. She was slightly past her twentieth year, her lips were coloured blue, and the usual scroll was tattooed upon her chin. She was of more ample form than her companions, and her fully developed limbs indicated no more strength than she possessed; for many young lads declared, from their personal experience, that she could wrestle a fall as well as any of themselves. Glowing with the animation which sparkled in her eyes, and flushed her cheeks; her fine form displaying its robust symmetry; full of youth, health, and beauty, she represented Maori beauty before the advent of the *pakeha** and the fall of her race.

* The white man.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THAT division of labour between fishermen and their wives existed in Maoria which may still be seen in some parts of Scotland, where the moment the keel of the boat touches the strand or quay, the work of the men is over till the boat again goes to sea; even baiting the fishing lines being done by the women, who take charge of and dispose of the fish. As the canoes came abreast of the esplanade below the Pa, those which had taken large numbers of fish touched at the landing place, where women with baskets were ready to carry them away. Besides the women from the village, there were parties from the great Pa, and from the neighbouring settlements, waiting for their turn to fill the baskets which were fastened to their backs with two long straps joined by a moveable cross-piece, and which were capable of containing loads under which the brawniest criers of "Caller Ou" would have quickly staggered.

Digitized by Google

It was noticeable that this heavy work fell to the share of the married women. The young girls were exempt. The language concisely tells the whole story —*hine*, a girl, *wahine*, a woman or carrier. Previous to marriage, girls were not required or expected to perform laborious work, under the impression that if they worked hard before their frames had attained full maturity, they would not become the mothers of offspring sufficiently vigorous to inherit the martial prowess of their fathers. Thus cared for, maidens were not impatient to enter the married state, and they were allowed a degree of freedom which might have been incompatible with strict morality, but for a custom or law, as it might be termed, which allowed no woman, married or single, to go any distance from her home without being accompanied by a companion of her own sex.

The fleet of fishing canoes were constructed of four varieties of wood, white and red pine, cedar (*totara*), and *mangio*, that incomparable timber for canoe or boat building. Light as cork, and tough and durable as oak, no timber floats like it. White pine was the wood usually employed, from the fact of its growing in such masses by the water-side and its being so easily worked; but of all the native woods it was the least durable when exposed to the weather. The red pine was also in general use, the durable and easily worked *kawrie* pine, so plentiful in the North, being almost an exotic in the centre of the island, where also the *totara* was less common than in the South. Any number of

Digitized by Google

boats may be built on the same model, but no two fishing canoes were ever exactly alike. They were made of one single piece of wood. In their construction the master builder was guided by the shape of the tree, and nature gave him a large field in which to display his skill. War canoes, being constructed of at least five pieces, for hull, stem, stern, and sides, presented a more uniform appearance than those carved out of a single tree.

In the whole fleet a finer model could not have been found than the *mangio kopapa,* a small canoe which now swiftly approached the landing-place. She was about eighteen feet long, twenty-eight inches wide near the stern, and twenty inches deep. Capable of carrying four or five persons in ordinary weather, with only one on board she would glide over the heaviest seas in safety, and in smooth water few canoes, propelled by an equal number of paddles, could come near her.

Its occupant satisfied with his morning's work, was one of the first to leave off fishing; he coiled up his fishing lines in a neat flexible basket made of *ti* tree leaves, carried on shore the stone anchor, and, paddle in hand, walked up the bank, leaving a large heap of *kahawai* in the centre of his canoe. Who can define the qualities which make a good fisherman? Quickness of eye and hand, and delicacy of feeling are required, but there is still a something which cannot be described. One fisherman will see or feel a fish rise, and strike it, while another, less piscatorially gifted, will not be aware that a fish has touched his bait until

Digitized by Google

it is yards away. Anatomists tell us that it is not until some seconds have elapsed that the nerves of a whale, harpooned in the centre of its body, convey the information to its brain; and so perhaps it is with some fishermen; their nerves do not act with sufficient velocity, hence their want of success when fish are shy and difficult to catch. The fisherman who had just landed, Ngawhare, the chief Tohunga of the Ngatiroa, had that morning fully maintained his reputation, a far more difficult task, by the bye, when fish are biting freely and hooking themselves, and any one can catch them, than when they are shy, and require to be made to take the bait. The Tohunga was a well-preserved man who did not look forty, though he must have numbered at least a lustre beyond that age. He had taken life easily. Not of high birth, he was a self-made man, who by sheer force of talent had raised himself till he was the most influential man, not only in his own tribe, but amongst all the tribes of the great river who were in alliance with the Ngatiroa. His appearance unmistakably showed a mixture of Papuan blood with that of Polynesia. He had the high broad forehead of the superior race, but the crisp curly hair, broad nose, and constant smile of the former; while in temperament he was unquestionably rather Negro than Maori, for he had more wives, selected for their handsome persons, than any other chief on the river.

In his youth he had displayed great quickness of eye and hand; no young man of his years had equal skill in

Digitized by Google

designing a canoe, or in carving a handsome paddle, a task in which no Islanders have equalled the Maoris. He thus early acquired the name of "Tohunga," an untranslatable word, the nearest approach to which is "artist;" but it means all sorts of artists, from a sooth-sayer, or as some would say prophet, to the architect of a cottage. Ngawhare, as soon as his years permitted, became a *tohunga*, such as there were in all large settlements. He could plan a fortification to the approval of the most veteran engineers, design a war canoe, or superintend the shaping of the hull, and the carving of the head, side, and stern pieces. He also grew into request as a physician or wizard, a better word by which to designate the practiser of incantations than the sacred name of priest. He had a good memory, and early learned from the old people many of their ancient *karakia*, or incantations.

His most intimate friend was the young chief Tomo, who was a few years younger than himself, and to whom he was attached as much as he was capable of loving anyone except himself. Their friendship was all the closer inasmuch as they pursued different courses in life, which never clashed. Tomo was a mere warrior; his friend was a sage who desired to enjoy in peace the good things of this life. The Romans supposed that no man could be capable of the crime of parricide, so they made no law against that unnatural crime. The Maoris believed that no person was capable of being guilty of cowardice; there is, therefore, no word in their language which expresses

※ note 1, page 191.

Digitized by Google

poltroonery, the nearest being equivalent to "a lazy fellow." They supposed that all men were born brave; some more so than others, and that the same man would upon some days be far braver than upon other days; surprise, dreams, omens, twenty things, might make a brave man occasionally disinclined to fight. Ngawhare, who often took long solitary rambles with his eel spear for a pretext, and who had certainly shown no alacrity in putting himself forward when obliged to go on warlike expeditions, was once called "a lazy fellow" by a young warrior who had recently distinguished himself; he laughed at the joke, but took an early opportunity "to make faces" at the wife of his traducer, knowing that, whether or no the lady returned his glances, the ultimate result must be an invitation from the aggrieved husband to practice the spear exercise in the presence of the tribe. When his foresight proved correct, and the duel took place, good manners forced Ngawhare to allow the injured husband to make a few thrusts without returning them. Having received and successfully parried these, he astonished the spectators by the rapidity and skill with which he speared his antagonist through the side and shoulder; carefully avoiding the infliction of a mortal wound, the consequences of which would have been disagreeable. From that day it was acknowledged that he knew how to use a spear, the greatest of all weapons, whenever he saw good reason. We may cite one instance of the means by which he maintained the influence obtained by the soothsaying or prophetic side of his character.

Digitized by Google

Upon the death of Riwihutia, the wife of his friend Tomo, that chief took her loss so greatly to heart that it was thought he would follow her to Te Reigna, the land of spirits. In vain they brought him his infant daughter, he would not notice her; he mourned as those who will not be comforted, and was evidently passing away, when Ngawhare announced to him that Riwihutia had appeared to him the previous night, and had requested Tomo to meet her that evening at his, Ngawhare's, house.

That night some of the principal chiefs, with a few of their wives, met at the rendezvous. The first watch of the night passed in anxious expectation; the small *puriri* fire (a wood that burns like charcoal) had all but burned itself out, and the second watch had about half gone by; the visitors were grouped round the embers, some sitting, others, overpowered by sleep, dozing upon mats; the master of the house was lying at the end of the apartment, but some distance from the wall, when a slight noise was heard like a hand breaking through the rushes, of which the walls were built, from the outside of the house. "Did you hear that?" whispered the awestruck visitors to one another, while one of them aroused the Tohunga by taking hold of his foot. The noise increased until it resembled the sound of a person forcing his way through the rushes into the house.

A thin small voice then addressed them from the roof—"Greetings to you all! to you my husband, to you my father-in-law, to all of you, men and women,

Digitized by Google

salutations, ! " None replied, while the panting of the unhappy husband could be distinctly heard.

The voice continued, " Speak to me; oh, speak to me, my husband! Where art thou, dearest ? "

With one bound the husband sprang from the ground, and striking himself heavily against the low ridge pole of the roof, fell to the ground.

The Tohunga then spoke. " He cannot speak to you ; tell him what are your wishes."

The voice replied—" He must live that he may cherish my child; it is my wish that he take another wife." No one had courage for further question, and after a short interval the voice said, " Farewell my relations ! " and again, as if high in the air, " Farewell ! " then as if higher still and almost lost in the distance, " Farewell ! "

* This séance saved the life of Tomo. He consented to live, and the wishes of the departed were complied with sooner than was agreeable to the bereaved husband, for the tribe speedily married him to a blooming young girl of whom he took not the slightest notice. His affections were concentrated upon his daughter Ora, and he remained a silent reserved man, over whom the Tohunga alone possessed any influence. From the date of the mystic interview between Tomo and his lost wife, Ngawhare became a person of the greatest importance ; for only the very oldest persons in the tribe could remember the days when it had possessed a *tohunga* of sufficient *mana* (power) to summon the dead or to call spirits into council. He was at once

* note 2, page 192.

Digitized by Google

initiated into the secret Council of the Elders, and his fame spread beyond the river to the most distant parts of the Island.

Forthwith a considerable change took place in his mode of carrying on his profession of *tohunga*. He persistently refused to continue the practice of surgery or medicines, saying that his *atna* (spirit) did not care a rush how many of them lived or died; and hair cutting and tattooing, arts he had formerly successfully practised, he now utterly abjured and devoted himself to the highest *karakia* and soothsaying, summoning, upon very great occasions, his *atna* into council. Only once did he depart from his rule of not practising surgery. Having accompanied the tribe upon a war party at not too dangerous a distance for a man of his habits, he was engaged in incantations for the success of his comrades when he heard that his friend Tomo had been struck down by a blow from a *toroai*, or wooden sword. The *toroai* is an exceedingly ingeniously constructed weapon made of hard heavy wood, in shape something like the letter P; battle-axe at one end and spear at the other, it is adapted for either stroke or thrust, its broad sharp circular edge inflicting most unsightly wounds. It was well that the ascetic Tomo had received the blow, and not his uxorious friend, for the sharp blade had cut through his nose and broken the left side of his lower jaw. When the Tohunga found his friend he removed the clumsy bandages which hands less skilful than his own had fastened, and proceeded to do the best he could to raise the

Digitized by Google

broken nose and reset the jaw. Tomo soon found reason to congratulate himself on his friend's relapse into surgery, for his features on convalescence presented a much less unfavourable appearance than they would have done but for the interference of the skilful Ngawhare.

The presence of so valuable a personage was greatly sought after, and he possessed houses at the great eel Pa upon Rotorua lake, and at the settlement upon the upper Waitebuna where dwelt an offshoot of the tribe which had intermarried with the tribes of the upper basin of the river. If happiness consisted in a plurality of wives, houses and canoes, the Tohunga ought to have been a happy man, for he was nominally the owner of more canoes (his assistance and co-partnership as a skilful designer being eagerly sought after), and actually the owner of more wives and houses than any other man upon the river. Yet it is not improbable, that many were more successful in the pursuit in which we are all engaged, and in which success never lasts long, the pursuit of happiness. Even the day and night dreams of his melancholy friend Tomo of re-union with his lost wife, may, in the bare anticipation, have afforded a greater foretaste of happiness than that actually experienced by the omnipotent Tohunga in the fruition of all his wishes.

Although early marriages were, as we have seen, discouraged by the Maori polity, a life of celibacy for either sex was entirely beyond their philosophy. The mission of woman was to increase and multiply; that

Digitized by Google

of man was to defend his home. In a state in which perfect peace was unknown, in which its frequent war parties would be either utterly defeated and annihilated, or return as victors followed by a train of captive women and children, it unavoidably resulted that the females outnumbered the males very considerably. Polygamy thus became inevitable, and, though most indulged in by chiefs, whose alliance was sought after, was confined to no rank of life. A polygamist might be a great chief or a poor old slave; either might without reproach possess a plurality of wives. It was their private business, and did not concern the commonwealth, though the great body of the people were monogamists, and were of opinion that more than one wife did not add to a man's happiness. Old couples, who had passed through life faithfully, might be seen sleeping as closely locked in one another's arms as when, half a century earlier, they had represented love and beauty. Upon the death of the husband the wife frequently insisted upon following him to Te Reigna; and this, if closely watched, she would effect without outward violence. Sometimes, but less frequently, a man would follow his departed wife. There existed, however, no law or custom obliging husband or wife to die with one another, so Maoria was not the island visited by Sinbad the sailor upon his fourth voyage; nor did it practice either the one-sided Indian sacrifice of Suttee. The utmost that custom demanded was that the wife or wives of a great chief should remain widows for the remainder of their lives. Strange as it may appear, the Tohunga had un-

Digitized by Google

doubted faith in his own incantations, and that morning when he caught "the *mataika,*" the first fish, as the first fruit of the line or net, or the first man slain or taken prisoner in battle was called; he had carefully taken it off the hook, plucked a hair from his head, which he placed in the mouth of the fish, and, having repeated an old incantation over it enjoining it to send its companions to his lines, he returned it to the water, preferring to attribute his success to the power of his incantation than to the skill of his hands. Now his superstition demanded a second offering; and as he turned the stem of his canoe towards the shore, he cast his eye over his haul of fishes, and selecting the one showing the strongest signs of life, he replaced it in the river.

As he landed the soothsayer looked round with an eye which saw, and an instinct which comprehended, everything. The gay attire of Tui caught his eye, and recognising the shawl which he knew she had for months been engaged in weaving for her grandfather, he advanced towards the girls.

"The Tohunga is coming," said Hira to Tui. "His appearance is distasteful to me," replied Tui, "but I must speak to him to give him my grandfather's message."

"What is there bad about the Tohunga, Tui?" said Ora, "to me he seems a kind, good-natured man."

Tui made no reply, for Ngawhare was close upon them.

"Salutations to you all," said the soothsayer, ap-

Digitized by Google

proaching the girls. "Salutations to you, Hira," he repeated, catching the eye of the girl who he saw wished to address him.

Hira rejoined, "The Elder Father ('*Te Kan matua*,' the name usually given to the Chief of the Tribe) would speak with you."

"That is well," replied Ngawhare. "What is his appearance?"

"He is as usual, but he fasted yesterday."

Having exchanged these few words, Ngawhare, first carefully depositing his fishing lines and paddles in his house, entered the neighbouring "guest house," and seated himself among some old men who were feasting upon fresh fish and sweet potatoes, and who gladly made way for him.

In a meal partaken of in public, by men living in a state of communism, all do not share and share equally, like a shipwrecked crew tossing in a long boat or drifting helplessly upon a raft. The finest fish and the best vegetables were reserved for those who held the first places in the community; a fair share was given to the people; and the poor, here represented by slaves, received the refuse and the scraps. As quickly as it was possible to open another oven, and place its contents in newly-made baskets of flax leaves, a relay of food was placed before the most influential man of the tribe; who, with great deliberation, enjoyed an ample breakfast.

Returning to his house, he selected a favourite weapon, a small spear made of *manuka*, dark and heavy

Digitized by Google

as rosewood, with the grain so true that it ran perpendicularly through the spear with mathematical precision from the point to the butt. Passing out at the gate of the Pa, he proceeded along the broad road leading to Ngutukaka, affectionately regarding his weapon with the eye of a proficient. The *pieren* was, in Maori opinion, a priceless weapon to which a man might with safety trust his life. The spear of an antagonist might well shiver in parrying the thrust of a weapon hard as stone, and a blow from a then unknown substance—iron—would have been required to break the arm which had accomplished so many great deeds in so many battles.

Thoughtfully Ngawhare proceeded along the wide road which separated the fishing village from the fortress, few of those who passed troubling him with salutations, when they noticed how absorbed he appeared to be. Although it was a time of peace, at least as much peace as there ever was in Maoria, almost every man he met, like himself, carried arms; even if he carried a spade or some other tool in his other hand; for when he arose in the morning no man in Maoria could say that the day before him might not prove to be a day of battle. Even when at peace with his nearest neighbours, and when dreading nothing from enemies at a distance, every freeman, in a land where war was believed to be the normal state of things, habitually carried arms.

His road lay along the bank of the Mohaka stream, which, deep and sluggish until it reached Ngutukaka,

Digitized by Google

served for the arsenal and dockyard of the Tribe. The canoes, mostly hauled up on the banks, and protected from the weather by long narrow sheds, appeared to increase in size as he approached the fortress, under the immediate protection of which was drawn up the fleet of dismantled war canoes. Not yet launched for the season, their ornamented stem and stern-posts, their streamers of feathers, and all their other bravery, were carefully deposited in stores built upon piles to preserve their contents from the damp.

Large canoes were fashioned in the forest where grew the trees from which the hulls were formed; but the little less laborious work of carving the immense slabs, which formed the top sides, could be done at home; so great stores of timber were collected, and might here be seen in all states of preparation.

As he approached the Pa, the sound of the busily-plied stone adzes increased; the result of the labour of industrious workmen with these primitive tools, the blades of which were formed of stone, being shown in the stupendous works in wood, which, now that he had arrived at "The Great Mouth" or gate of the Pa, were displayed on either side of the road.

The huge figures carved upon the tops of the posts of the outer defence that guarded the portal, if grotesque, had in them something awful and unreal. These gigantic figures did not represent evil spirits, as might have been supposed from their hideous appearance, but enemies, male and female, by whose names they were called. There they stood, forming the half

Digitized by Google

segment of a circle, guarding the entrance of the renowned Hill Fort, which no enemy had ever yet successfully attacked.

A few yards from the high palisade commenced the natural staircase, which led to the next defence. For want of a better term we have called it a staircase, but it was part of a basalt rock, whose rib-like formation twisted spirally round from the ground to where the solid stone terminated, some seven hundred feet above, and a cliff of boulders and earth commenced. This had been scarped, terraced, and palisaded; and outside the first palisade were stored boulders and trunks of trees, ready to be rolled down upon an enemy. This terrace was succeeded by a second terrace and palisade, but it was the stone staircase which bade defiance to the ordinary modes of attack by sap or fire. Had it been considered necessary the hill might have been further scarped and terraced, like the works on the numerous volcanic hills in the centre of the Island in the neighbourhood of Waitemata; and which, minus the palisading, will remain till the end of time, memorials of the industry of the Maori race. For those immense hills were terraced and fortified by men whose sole tool was a wooden spade.

The natural staircase, which had led some Maori engineer to conceive the idea of fortifying the hill, was formed of what may be called a double rib; it was the only one of the formation which was of sufficient width or regularity for a man to walk up. It had perhaps occurred from "a flaw in nature's casting," or more

Digitized by Google

probably, in a country which shows so many traces ot the shakes it has undergone, was the effect of an earthquake. The second gate was in the palisade of the first terrace, which extended more than a sufficient distanee to cover the staircase; this alone would have made the fortress impregnable. The third gate and second palisade and terrace, were therefore a compliment to custom. But before Ngawhare enters the fortress, another natural advantage which it possessed may be mentioned. On the northern face of the hill, from the base of the boulder formation to its summit, a belt of natural forest was still standing, protected by the mysterious law of *tapu;* the reason being, that, on that side, a spring of water, accessible by a path from the top, issued from the rocky cliff. This was always a convenience, and in time of war saved the labour of filling calabashes or of catching rain to refill the vessels in which water was stored. The staircase was on the eastern and lowest part of the hill, and the High Street of this gigantic Edinburgh Castle was absolutely inaccessible at any other point of this citadel of nature.

The upper gate opened upon a clear space; an oblong, round which, clear of the fortifications, stood the public buildings and the houses of the principal chiefs. There stood the guest house, the wrestling ground, the largest building in the place (the favourite resort in rainy weather), and the public sleeping houses; and at one of its extremities was placed the platform from which the Chiefs addressed the people.

* note 3. page 193.

Digitized by Google

The régime of communism under which the people lived tolerated no drones; all were "busy bees" employed "on works of labour or of skill." It was a state of universal industry. From the ruling Chief to the most abject slave, all had their occupation; woman pursued the never-ending task all ages and countries have alloted to her, the preparation of food. The noise of "woman at the mill" was unheard; but the sound of her mallet engaged on the no less laborious work of preparing fern root, the staple bread of the Maoris, was the most familiar sound in the place. Fern root carefully dried in the sun and placed in store houses will keep sound as long as it is kept dry. When required for use it was roasted in the embers, and having been pounded bit by bit upon a block by a hand mallet, it became fit for consumption, and formed a not unpalatable food, resembling toasted bread in taste. This work of roasting and pounding fern root was chiefly performed by female slaves, their mistresses generally perferring to pass their time in weaving. The rule for all, however, men and women, was work during the hours between the morning and evening meals. During the rest of the day those who chose pursued a favourite indoor task, or joined in some amusement. At times, chiefly on occasions of ceremony or of display, there was an entire cessation of work, when all were supposed to assist at the festival.

The Tohunga, during his short walk, felt the vague uneasiness, that goes by the name of presentiment, respecting the old Chief who had summoned him. He

Digitized by Google

remembered that it was just a year since his old friend had told him that he was about to have an attack of "weariness," that disease so fatal to old people; and that he had then had much difficulty in persuading him that he was mistaken in his precognition of his symptoms. He had great influence over the old man, and he had no wish that the sceptre of the Tribe should pass into younger hands.

Passing up the staircase on the right and inner side, among the throng, mostly carrying loads of fish, firewood, or bundles of flax leaves, scarce a man of whom passed without wishing to greet him, though they respected his obvious wish to be uninterrupted, he reached the upper gate, avoiding the broad road through the open ground, on the opposite side of which stood the house of the Ariki, and, turning to the right, proceeded along the Northern and wooded face of the hill. After the path which led to the springs had been crossed, the track became so overgrown and indistinct that no one, not in the habit of often making use of it, could without hesitation have followed it to its termination in a grove of gloomy *totara* trees, which stood upon the edge of a precipice many hundred feet in depth. The Tohunga was now in his own peculiar domain, the tapued grove, the secrets of which were in his own keeping. Glancing round a gnarled and bushy tree, stunted in height, but of luxurious though gloomy foliage, he perceived a decayed branch within reach of his hand; slowly chanting an incantation, he grasped two withered twigs of nearly similar appearance, one

Digitized by Google

in either hand, and with a sudden jerk broke off both from the tree. The piece he held in his right hand broke short off where he held it, while a long dry twig remained in his left. With an air of disappointment he exclaimed, "He will die! Last year I saved him with difficulty, now my art is powerless to alter what Fate has irrevocably decreed."

In outward appearance, however, he soon rose superior to the disappointment caused by the unfavourable reply of the auspices he had consulted.

Regaining with his weapon his usual mien, his habitual smile, and his searching glance, he left the grove, taking a circuitous road back to the chief's house by completing the circuit of the Fort to its entrance; but the varied views of sea, river, and mountain, which unfolded themselves to his unheeding gaze, offered no attraction to this great hunter whose prey was man.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

THE traditions of the Maoris universally affirm that their ancestors came from Hawaiki, "the cradle of the race," a northern island. Whether the island be Tahiti or Oahu of the Friendly or Sandwich Groups is a matter of dispute among Europeans, but is of no consequence to our story. That they came from some one of the South Sea Islands, their language, physical appearance, and customs place beyond dispute. The Maoris have preserved the names of the ten canoes in which the emigration was effected, the names of the chiefs who commanded, and of many other chiefs who came over in them. Until the introduction of printed books scattered tradition to the winds, not a lad or girl of free race but could have traced his or her descent from those whom they looked upon as something more than human, from the heroes who had sat in the sterns of Tainui, Te Arawa, Aotea, or some other vessel of what they considered the immortal fleet;

Digitized by Google

besides possessing a general knowledge of the genealogy of the principal chiefs of the different tribes amongst whom the island was divided. Such knowledge was acquired early in life, and the habit of learning dry genealogical trees developed the great powers of memory for which the Maoris were famous; powers which some yet possess, and which enable them to repeat, verbatim, speeches at the delivery of which they have been present.

All were more or less acquainted with the migration of their forefathers from Hawaiki to Maoria; but the *Runanga*, or Secret Council first formed amongst those who originated the migration, were alone cognizant of the causes which had led their forefathers to abandon the most delightful islands in the world, and of the arcana of the policy then formed, and at the time of our story, still pursued. Primitive man never had a more delightful home than Hawaiki, a land with an eternal summer, with a sea of a delightful temperature and abounding with fish, with a soil so fertile that a *taro* pit, a few yards square, provided food for a family all the year round, and with a climate so mild that a piece of easily made *tapa* cloth formed a sufficient covering for their indolent frames. Possessed of every necessary in superfluous abundance, the inhabitants of Hawaiki sought for luxuries and found them. The discovery that the juice, expressed by chewing the root of the *Kawa Kawa*, fermented and became an intoxicating drink, was hailed by general acclamation; but the discovery proved a last farewell to their primitive happi-

Digitized by Google

ness and simplicity. The theocratic chiefs, indulging in drunken day dreams, ceased to be the fathers of their people, and superstition, cruelty, lust, and inebriety succeeded the mild and benignant simplicity under whose sway countless generations of Islanders had happily lived and passed away. Papuan dances of girls enveloped in flowing robes, which rather revealed than concealed their voluptuous limbs, took place in public, lazily gazed upon by the priests and nobles of the land, as they reclined upon couches and quaffed draughts of *Kawa* held to their lips by their female favourites. This general debauch was not without its opponents amongst all classes of society. Parents, who had successfully resisted temptation in the hope of saving their children, were shocked at the fall of a favourite son or daughter, and a secret society was formed for the reformation of morals under the name of "The *Runanga.*" The reformers, forced to work in secret, were unsuccessful, and the majority of the chiefs were in favour of the extermination of the members of the society. The hierarchy, however, which in reality possessed the chief power in the Islands, was averse to wholesale bloodshed: it conceived a more effectual plan for disposing of its antagonists, whose number it had no wish to increase by adding the attraction of martyrdom to their cause. Its members therefore proposed to the chiefs of the *Runanga* that they should join them in enjoying the goods the Gods provided, as they phrased it, or accept the alternative of emigrating to some other island. The *Runanga*, without

Digitized by Google

hesitation, chose the alternative. In some civilized countries, when a man has proved unfortunate, or foolish, or disreputable, a family council of his relatives is held, and it is decided that he and his shall emigrate to the antipodes under the penalty of being sent to Coventry, or further, if he refuses. The hope that "something must turn up" usually induces a ready acquiescence, upon which the relations of the emigrant speed and assist his departure, devoutly hoping that they will thus soon have seen the last of him.

The hierarchy and nobles of Hawaiki gave every assistance to the preparations for the great emigration; ten canoes, the finest in the islands, were prepared for "the fanatics," as they termed their opponents; quantities of provisions were sent to the villages on the sea board where the emigrants were collected, and whence, when the preparations were completed, they took their departure.

All suspected of favouring the attempted reformation were required to give personal proof of their adhesion to the Sardanapalian creed of Hawaiki, "eat, drink, and love; the rest is not worth a thought." The sailing of the fleet, therefore, left the island without the smallest leaven of moral reformation. The interval, during which preparations for departure from Hawaiki were making—canoes of the great size required having to be built as well as fitted out—was employed by the chiefs of the emigrants in forming plans for the future, and in framing the policy they intended to pursue on reaching their new home.

Digitized by Google

It will readily be credited that they passed a resolution that the chief power should remain with themselves, and be inherited by their successors. Believing that the luxury, which they despised and hated, for it was about to drive them forth as wanderers upon "the great sea," was climatic and induced by a warm temperature, they resolved to seek a new home in the colder regions of the south, and there establish a republic in which bearing arms should be the first and permanent duty of every freeman.

Idleness they had found the mother of vice; all, therefore, must labour for the state, and experience soon taught them that they were right in supposing that man, from maturity to the grave, could, as a rule, be profitably employed in ministering to the happiness of his fellow-countrymen.

Since they did not anticipate acquiring peaceful possession of their new home (drift canoes, with the remains and strange arms of those who had perished in them, had occasionally been tossed upon the shores of Hawaiki), they prepared for battle with the inhabitants when they reached the land they had resolved to make their own. Daily, during the months which preceded their departure, they exercised themselves in the use of arms, in throwing the spear, in fencing matches, in running, wrestling, and dancing; the war dance having been introduced as the strongest possible contrast to the lascivious dances of their countrymen. All their preparations being completed, the emigrant fleet of ten canoes put to sea, bound upon the most

Digitized by Google

wonderful voyage of combined discovery and emigration ever successfully attempted.

Each canoe contained an epitome of the people, domestic animals, and edible plants of Hawaiki. On board every vessel were chiefs, people, and slaves, together with their families. The quadrupeds were represented by only two species, by the animal which in hut or palace, in famine-stricken canoe or in stately ship, has, according to Lord Bacon, but one religion, the worship of his master,—the dog; and by his enemy and antithesis, so clean in his native wilds, so foul, filthy, and mischievous, when domesticated—the hog. To the consumption of all the representatives of that unclean race by the famine-pinched emigrants, both Maoris and Europeans attribute the origin of the dreadful practice of cannibalism into which the Maoris fell a few generations before the advent of the *Pakehas*.

The dog survived, to be of no use in a country in which there were no animals to hunt; but his skin was found capable of being woven with flax into a shield-like garment, impenetrable by wooden weapons. Their provisions consisted of dried fish and flesh, and large stores of the vegetable productions of the island, *taro*, *kumiras* (sweet potato), and *karaka* berries. The water taken was contained in the largest calabash gourds procurable.

Every rank of life in Hawaiki had, as we have seen, its representatives amongst the emigrants, but not so every profession. The hierarchy was unrepresented. It had resolutely opposed the reforms proposed by the

Digitized by Google

Runanga, being convinced that a state of affairs in which it possessed a paramount influence, none daring to oppose the edicts issued from the dread *Morai*, and in which it openly enjoyed an uncommon share of riches and power, could not by any possibility be improved to its advantage. The *Runanga* numbered amongst its members some of the highest-born and bravest chiefs in the island; their relatives could not in honour have allowed them to be attacked, defeated, and slain, or taken prisoners and sacrificed to idols in the *Morai*. The attempt, moreover, would in the opinion of the priesthood have divided the island into two hostile camps — hence its unusual clemency. Bitter hatred, however, remained between the *Runanga* and the hierarchy, and neither the blood of human beings nor of swine was allowed to flow in the *Morai* to propitiate the Sea God, or the Divinity of the Winds, and ensure smooth water and gentle breezes for the departing fleet; neither did a solitary priest, from conviction, affection, or ambition, vouchsafe an offer to accompany the emigrants.

All the canoes were large, with stem, stern, and side pieces sewn on to them; and some of them, notably Te Arawa, were double canoes with houses built upon them. Still, a successful voyage of four thousand geographical miles in such frail vessels, and their safe arrival, though frequently out of one another's sight, at the same destination, remain without parallel in the annals of the barbarous South Seas.

Under a steady north-west wind the fleet hoisted

Digitized by Google

sail and put forth to sea; the assembled thousands who witnessed their departure bidding them adieu with loud cries of "Go in peace!" "Go in peace!" To which was responded, "Remain at rest!" "Remain at rest!" The severance was joyful to both parties alike, and not a tear was shed. On the arrival of the emigrants at Maoria, the absence of wailing and lamentation at their departure came to be looked upon as a fortunate omen, and tears upon the separation of friends or relatives were strictly forbidden as unlucky.

Of the emigrant fleet, some landed at Mukatu on the East coast, others at Kawlua and Aotea on the west coast, and thence originated the tribal divisions; the promised, or rather the given land, being amicably divided between these different bands. The aborigines of the island, scattered groups of nomadic moa hunters of Papuan origin, were speedily and so effectually subdued, that scarce a trace of them now remains beyond the tradition of their subjugation, and the occasional appearance of their physical characteristics, which now and again betray themselves in the descendants of the mixed races which arose from their amalgamation with their conquerors. The Maoris of to-day present two distinct types of physical structure, which blend and merge one into another through every shade of gradation; the bold high countenance of the Polynesian, with its Mosaic outlines, sinking gradually into the broad flat features of the negro-like Papuan. At the time of our story, and before the advent of the Euro-

Digitized by Google

pean had fused the races, the descendants of the aborigines, in some parts of the Island, formed serf tribes, their original characteristics being more or less qualified by an admixture of Maori blood. These small tribes, or rather "*hapu*" divisions of tribes, lived under the protection of their powerful neighbours, with whom they were connected by marriage. A girl, unusually tall and well-formed, though belonging to the inferior race, was often taken to wife by one of her superiors, to whom she went rejoicing in her good fortune. These alliances had, in the centre of the Island, been so numerous, that the high bold Maori features had there become much less marked.

The dispersion of the immigrants broke up and scattered the original and secret *Runanga*, but from its ashes arose a *Runanga* in every tribe, each of which zealously enforced the laws their parent society had framed. These tribal *Runangas*, or councils, consisted of the ruling chief, some of his nearest relations, the war chief of the tribe, and a few of its greatest and most distinguished men whom the council invited to join it. Admission was theoretically open to all, though it may be said that there was, in practise, but one road leading to it, that of military success. An exceptional case, such as that of the Tohunga, did not occur in a tribe once in a century, and even the family of the ruling chief were not called into the council until they had distinguished themselves upon the field of battle.

Succession to the tribal government was not heredi-

Digitized by Google

tary, though limited to the family of the Ariki. Had the latter sons of a mature age, the eldest, if an accomplished soldier, would as a matter of course succeed his father as the head of the tribe; if not, the choice fell upon some younger son, brother, cousin, or distant relative who possessed the necessary qualification. The *Runanga* as a rule gave expression to the popular wish, and a disputed succession was unknown. The chief and the *Runanga* governed; but a people living in a state of socialism expected at least an apparent share in the government. The *Runanga*, therefore, occasionally submitted questions to a plebiscite. When war was determined upon, or almost determined upon, the question was submitted to the assembled warriors, whose reply was generally certain to be in the affirmative. On other occasions, notably on what was considered a very important question, that of a proposed marriage, there existed literally universal suffrage, for every free man, woman, and child possessed a vote. To be sure the women and children followed the lead of their husbands and fathers; but then they had the honour of voting, and it was held that this induced gravity and dignity amongst the young. It was only, however, upon the occasion of some proposed state marriage with another tribe that the question was thus submitted to the whole population. Upon ordinary occasions it would concern only the *hapu*, sept, or family, in which it was brought upon the tapis.

The policy, originated by the parent society and enforced throughout the Island, for the prevention of the

Digitized by Google

disorders which had ruined "the cradle of the race," consisted in considering everything subservient to the profession of arms. With this object every subject was considered from the point of view it bore in relation to military affairs. War was declared to be the normal state of man; he was therefore trained to arms from his infancy, and habitually carried them from the moment that he was able to support their weight till nearly the last hour of his existence. His spear was thus the first and last support of his tottering footsteps. All, from the chief to the slave, were enjoined to practise industry, and to abhor luxury. The war-dance was practised both as a martial exercise and as an amusement, and was considered equally adapted to give honourable reception to friendly visitors or to intimidate an enemy on the field of battle. Other dances, and all dancing by women, were prohibited. The attempt to make intoxicating drink was punished by death, which indeed was the usual punishment inflicted by their few but severe laws.

Woman was taught to consider the privilege of uttering the songs of triumph with which she hailed the victorious, as the highest reward that could be bestowed upon female virtue. She was enjoined to be modest and silent, and never to go any distance from her home without a companion of her own sex. Aberrations from virtue incurred the capital penalty; but this law, in process of time, fell into disuse in respect to the conquered race; and, partially so, amongst the Maoris themselves, as soon as the duello between the injured husband and

Digitized by Google

the offender had become the recognized manner of settling this offence, or even the slightest attempt at its commission.

The Greeks worshipped ideal beauty—the Maoris worshipped ideal military perfection, and ignored the very existence of beauty, there being no such word in the language. "A choice man," the nearest approach which could be made to saying "a handsome man," had, as we have observed, the same meaning as "a pretty man" had in the Highlands of Scotland, before their depopulation and their conversion into grouse moors and deer forests; a course of procedure which will, doubtless, some day or other, meet with its reward. "A fine woman" meant a tall, robust female, whose appearance might be supposed to give promise of her becoming the mother of a family of stalwart children.

Maoria contained neither priests, temples, nor idols; and its religion, if it possessed any, was of the most mythical description. In some parts of the island there existed many legends; such as that of Maui having fished up the island from the bottom of the sea, and the Maori version of the origin of man. With other tribes, Uenguku, the *atna* or spirit of the rainbow, was considered the god of war, or war spirit, and as such was made the object of incantations; but none of these myths were of general acceptation, and even the name "*atna*," spirit, or god as it is often mistranslated, was sometimes bestowed upon a living chief. While there was an absence of religion, superstition everywhere abounded. All believed in and feared the *Taniwha*, or water demons, and

Digitized by Google

the demons of the woods and mountains; indeed, the bravest warrior would not have walked at night over the most familiar road without a lighted brand in his hand to keep away malevolent spirits. The natural causes of disease being unknown, they invented witchcraft, the belief in which was as universal as in the fact that spirits, on the death of the bodies they had animated, departed for the land of the hereafter from Te Reigna, a rocky point near the North Cape. Persons of all ages were subject to this dire disease of the imagination; the only chance of cure being to persuade the sufferers in the early stage of the disease that the charm of malign influence which bound them was broken by some superior power or skill. A person of note could not pass away, but his death was attributed to witchcraft, usually ascribed to the practices of an enemy at a distance; if, however, it suited the friends of the deceased to accuse some one near at hand who could conveniently be sacrificed, instant death was the smallest penalty inflicted. To these superstitions, chiefly, must be attributed the origin of the cruelty and cannibalism of which the Maoris were undoubtedly guilty.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

It is time to return to Ngawhare. The Ariki was seated on the ground in the verandah of his house, when the Tohunga entered. He had a small stone chisel in his hand, with which he was finishing the carving on the outside of a canoe bailer, which in shape and appearance resembled the upper shell of a tortoise. He exchanged greetings with the Tohunga, and continued his work in silence. Te Au O Te Rangi was of faultless pedigree; he could name his ancestors for twenty-two generations, commencing with the chief who commanded Aotea, one of the canoes which carried the immigrants from Hawaiki to Maoria. "The Elder Father," as Te Au was often called, was a man well-advanced on his earthly pilgrimage, for he had numbered nearer eighty than seventy years; not that this was looked upon as a great age amongst "this vigorous race of undiseased mankind," for both men and women still survived who had reached maturity at the time of

Digitized by Google

the Ariki's birth. Age had but lightly marked the old man; his close curly hair, the destructive practice of covering the head being unknown in his world, was but slightly grizzled; his beard, in accordance with universal custom, had been extirpated; and the dark lines pencilled upon his forehead and face by the art of the tattooer, concealed the lines drawn by the hand of time. The traces of the latter were chiefly visible in his sunken eye and thin nose; but even these marks might have been attributed to the too abstemious life led by the old man, and to anxiety rather than to old age.

His powerful frame was little bent, but the prominent veins on his arms and legs told the story that a life of hard work and long and weary marches inscribe on the tell-tale tablets of old age. Upon great state occasions when he addressed his people, his *mere* in his hand, his hair decorated with the rare feathers of the *Kotoku*, and the eyes which had looked upon so many victories again flashing fire, he looked indeed a great chief, and in the eyes of his countrymen was still without an equal. Other tribes would doubtless have said the same of their leaders, so it remains for the impartial historian to own that he was one of the half-dozen great chiefs of the island. Te Au had passed through life in a highly creditable, almost in a distinguished manner. Under his rule the tribe had held their own at home, and gained military distinction upon many distant expeditions.

His character, in the opinion of his countrymen, was

Digitized by Google

unimpeachable. In youth a promising soldier, in manhood the head and war-chief of his tribe, two dignities sometimes held by the same person, he had resigned, as age crept over him, the latter office to his son Karaka; a transfer amply justified by the high military qualities of the latter. His tribe were the more obedient to and satisfied with his sway that it was not tempered with mercy. One instance of his manner of administering justice will suffice. He had a favourite slave who followed him and slept at his door like a dog, and who, like a dog, was always ready to perform his behests. This man complained to his master of the infidelity of his wife. "Bring her before me," said the chief. On her appearing, "Woman!" said he, "my slave, your husband, has complained to me about you. I warn you not to transgress again." After a time the slave a second time complained to his master, who again told him to bring the woman before him. On her coming the chief took a rope, and after throwing ashes over the miserable naked creature to make her "a thing of no value," he bound her to a post, where she remained for some hours exposed to the derision of the children. The chief then unbound her and ordered her to follow him. In vain the victim and her husband begged for mercy, promising that she would not transgress again. "Do not mistake." said the chief, "I am not about to kill you for that, but for disobeying me." He led her to an unfrequented part of the fortress, and, ordering her to "lie down and not to look at him, as it would disturb him to see her eyes," with one blow of his *mere* he procured

Digitized by Google

a more effectual divorce for his servant than any ever pronounced by the courts at Westminster.

In his own person the Ariki was a model of conjugal fidelity. He had, as was usual, married early in middle life, and had, as we have seen, a family of three sons and one daughter. Though he lost his wife in comparatively early life, he had, when solicited to replace her, always peremptorily refused, that he might the more exclusively devote his time to public affairs. The one test of merit throughout the world—success—had ever accompanied his undertakings; it was therefore with reason that his tribe looked upon him as a great chief.

The Ariki worked on in silence for a long time after the arrival of the Tohunga; at last replacing his tools in one of the carved boxes in which the Maoris were accustomed to keep their valuables, *meres*, earrings, rare feathers, etc., he sat down beside Ngawhare, and, using the vocative case in the usual manner, exclaimed, "O, friend! accept this, the last piece of work I shall ever finish. I shall never commence another, for I am going away."

"Tell me more," replied his visitor.

"Last year when I found the sun less bright and warm than it used to be, I thought I was about to become ill, and die of weariness, the disease of old age. Thereupon you asked me was there no part of my life I would wish to live over again? I said that there was; when you replied that I could not then be weary of life, and I, in consequence, set aside the idea of dying. The part I would have wished to live over again was my

Digitized by Google

first *tawa.* I was a young man when I went with the great northern tribes to attack the Ngatirankawa at the Rotorua Lakes. We defeated the tribes of the lakes, and encamped for a week at Ohinematu, the Lake of Boiling Springs. We feasted and caroused over the spoils of our victory; but that was nothing, I have done that in many other places. It was the bathing I looked back to. In Te Reigna itself, the land of spirits, the bathing cannot be more delightful. You enter the warm water and swim towards the other side of the bay, where the boiling geysers are continually pouring hot water into the lake. You swim about in any temperature you please, and return to land, furious with the hunger of the hot mineral waters, to feast upon the stores of your enemies' provisions; at least, we did. It was glorious. I have seen many a *tawa*, but never one like my first to the Rotorua Lakes. You brought it forcibly back to my memory, and since then it has often formed the subject of my thoughts. But the dream has passed away now. I might have remained here a few years longer; I thought so myself, but yesterday I received notice to depart, and I am ready and willing to go. Listen to what I saw. The morning was pleasant and calm, and the sun shone brightly, so I thought that I would go outside and see if he was as warm as he used to be. I ordered a slave to spread a carpet on the mound at the back of the house, and I laid down upon it thinking on the past, when over my head I observed what at first I mistook for a small cloud. After a time it assumed a shape, but it was of

Digitized by Google

nothing that we know upon the earth. It distinctly resembled a canoe, and yet it was not the resemblance of an earthly canoe; both stem and stern were alike, and both round. The stems of our canoes are sharp and their sterns are either round or sharp. They have but one mast and one sail, whereas this monster had three straight masts and one slanting one, and carried eight sails. This terrible apparition was for a short time distinctly visible to me, but before I could call others to see it, it disappeared. A mirage, as you know, is not a very uncommon sight; but then it is merely things of this earth that we see mirrored in the clouds, mountains, trees, and water, sights portentous enough when seen in the sky, but insignificant and unimportant compared to the awful bark from the land of spirits that yesterday floated in the midst of heaven. It came for me."

The old man ceased, and the Tohunga sat long silent. The apparition seen by his chief was beyond even his philosophy. At last he solemnly replied, "It is true what you say; you have commenced the journey to Te Reigna, the land of the hereafter. You have done with life. Which of your sons do you name as your successor, Karaka or Te Wira?"

"Karaka, without doubt."

"Yes, I too look upon Karaka as the hope of the tribe; but is it not straight that the *Runanga* should be assembled to decide upon so important a matter as the passing over of your eldest son."

"Most of the *Runanga* are now at the Lake," replied

Digitized by Google

the old man. "Few of them are in the fort; but as you wish it, let them meet here to-night."

The Tohunga, having seen his patient inside the house, appropriated without a qualm the parting present of the old friend, whose last wishes he was secretly determined to thwart, and proceeded to give notice to the members of the *Runanga* who were in the neighbourhood to attend the meeting to be held that night. These were the three sons of the Ariki, an old chief named Ruia, and himself.

The Tohunga knew that were Karaka named Ariki of the tribe, that determined clear-headed man would rule without an adviser, and his own paramount influence would become much lessened. He therefore thought that his interests would be best served by placing at the head of the tribe the reserved and silent Te Wira, over whom he had much influence. Weighing in his mind, as he went forth from the Fort, the chances for and against the success of the manœuvre by which he hoped to defeat the wishes of the dying Ariki, and secure the succession for Te Wira, he came to the conclusion that he held the game in his own hand.

Crossing the square to his own house, the Tohunga gave the Chief's last gift into the charge of the lady who presided over his town establishment, with strict injunctions that no one was to touch it; for he felt a certain respect for his dying friend, a respect mingled with the sorrow of a great physician who has pocketed the last fee from his most profitable and most distinguished patient.

Digitized by Google

He then wended his way to the most busy part of the dock-yard, and there, as he expected, found Karaka; who, adze in hand, was directing the work of a number of men who were dubbing down the hull of a large war canoe which had been found to be too heavy.

"Salutations to you, friend!" he said to the chief who was working as well as giving directions.

Karaka, the war-chief of the tribe, presented the personification of manly strength to the eyes of his countrymen. In a language in which, as we have said, the word "beauty" has no existence, he was termed "a choice man," meaning that he was a fine powerful fellow. As the Maoris were neither phrenologists nor physiognomists, his broad forehead, calm face, and square, determined-looking lower jaw, were disregarded; but his width of chest, strong arms and hands, and enormously powerful lower limbs were fully appreciated. Where any day might prove a day of battle, waged not by missiles, but by close hand to hand encounter which the death of one of the combatants alone could terminate, strength of leg was of immense advantage to a warrior; and Karaka, with a kick, could have levelled most men. Distinguished for his courage, generosity, and hospitality, amongst a people remarkable for those virtues, he was wise, skilful, and unselfish to a degree that sometimes led him to abandon his own opinion out of deference to the feelings of his friends. He was so highly thought of, and the honour of being related to him by marriage so eagerly sought after, that he possessed four wives of rank and several of inferior

Digitized by Google

degree. His first wife, as he said, he had married for his own satisfaction, the others for the satisfaction of his friends. Yet so great were his forbearance, kindness and good temper, that he was able to preside over his large family in a quietude unknown to most polygamists.

Karaka, on being addressed by the Tohunga, laid down his adze, courteously returned the salutation, and, leading his visitor out of hearing of the workmen, awaited his pleasure.

Maori etiquette prescribed that a visitor who had an important communication to deliver should not immediately unburden himself; a custom sometimes carried to a very inconvenient extent, it being considered the height of rudeness to ask a guest the purport of his visit.

Ngawhare commenced by speaking of the morning's sport, and the prospects of the fishing season. He criticised the alterations making in the canoe with the authority of an expert, and then, in the same quiet tone of voice, informed Karaka that a meeting of the *Runanga* had been commanded by his father, and would take place that night after the evening meal. Without asking a question Karaka replied that he would attend the *Runanga*, and that he would tell Te Wira, who was at hand engaged in carving woodwork.

Re-entering the Kauroa Pa, the sooth-sayer proceeded to Ruia's house. There, overcome by the morning's exertions, first in fishing, and secondly in eating a prodigious quantity to satisfy the appetite

Digitized by Google

thereby acquired, and gratify his long unappeased craving for fresh food, which sailors expressively call being hungry for "blood meat," he found the obese warrior fast asleep in the folds of a net suspended in his verandah.

The blanks in life's lottery are everywhere many and its prizes few. The latter however do occasionally occur, and one of these in the Maori military lottery Ruia had had the good fortune to draw. It happened in this wise. The tribes of "the River," as the inhabitants of the banks of the Waitebuna loved to call that stream, were once, many years before the time of our story, engaged upon a *tawa* upon the east coast. Till the day of the battle which made Ruia famous, he had been looked upon as a staunch man-at-arms, but as one too heavy and too inert to have any chance of distinguishing himself. The rival armies joined issue, and at the all-important moment of the charge, Te Au O Te Rangi was wounded, and struck down; whereupon the enemy shouted,—"Te Au is killed. They have fallen! They have fallen! *Kahoro! Kahoro!*"—the term applied to a land-slip and a flying enemy. In the fallen chieftain's forces the young men of unsteady valour were already looking over their shoulders, and in another minute the battle would have been lost past redemption, when Ruia, who knew that he must either conquer or die, for a man of his size could not run away even if he desired to do so, bestrode the body of his chief, and wielding with the strength of seven men his terrible two-handed broadsword, formed from the

Digitized by Google

rib bone of a sperm whale, speedily cleared a circle round him, shouting the while,—"Rescue! Rescue! The Ariki yet lives!" At the sound of his well-known voice (his stentorian lungs were unequalled in the army) those who were about to fly took heart of grace, charged home, and caught the fluttering wings of victory as it hovered undecided over the field of battle.

On the return of the *tawa* to Ngutukaka, the maidens came forth to welcome the conquerors, waving green boughs and singing songs of victory; one of their many customs, which, combined with the Jewish appearance of their chiefs, would almost induce us to suppose that the Maoris are connected with the lost tribes of Israel. Ruia was the David of the day; the maidens hailed him as "the *toa* (hero) of Wairoa," and the chief whose life he had saved, successfully exerted his influence to bring into the *Runanga* the man who, as he said with truth, had saved the army from destruction. Honours so unexpected surfeited the stout warrior, who, having reached a position which ensured a full share of what in his secret heart he ranked far higher than military glory, viz. a share of the richest and rarest delicacies, such as pigeons and *tuis* baked and preserved in their own fat in boxes of *totara* bark, baked lampreys, bread made of whitebait, baskets of delicious little fresh water crayfish (generally caught in insufficient quantities to allow of their distribution among the commonalty), rested on his established fame, and was soon by his daily increasing bulk rendered perfectly incapable of undertaking any further offensive warfare.

Digitized by Google

By tacit public consent he appropriated to himself a post such as his soul loved, and for which he was well qualified, that of superintendent of the seine nets; and many a choice moke and mullet were toasted for him by his crews, conscious of their master's weakness, as they rested during the heat of the day. Five minutes' active service had thus made Ruia a Field Marshal on full pay and allowances for the rest of his life, and enabled him to lead a much respected life of mingled greatness and gluttony; while, upon state occasions, his presence was eagerly sought after by the tribes of the River as being highly ornamental. Such a life of perfect happiness was too bright to last; in his wildest dreams he could not have conceived an existence of greater bliss than that which had befallen him, until it was disturbed by what he considered impertinent interference with his own speciality.

The seas which surround Maoria are less bountifully supplied with fish than the waters of the northern hemisphere. And the numerous bays and harbours on the east coast are better supplied than the two estuaries and the few harbours on the west. It is, however, the old story of quantity for quality. The west coast fish are of infinitely better quality than those on the east, probably because the occidental seas are of a lower temperature. Moreover on the stormy west coast the ever rolling breakers make trawling upon the sea-board an impossibility. Fishing is, therefore, there confined to the estuaries and the mouths of rivers. In these localities there are what the Maoris

Digitized by Google

term "fish tides," and "tides without fish." When the weather is quite fine and settled, or the reverse, any fisherman can tell whether fish are likely to be obtainable; but when the weather is variable few can judge whether the flood tide, the best time for fishing, is teeming or barren. The great seine nets the Maoris made use of required two large top-sided canoes to hold them, and from sixty to eighty men to haul them. It was therefore a matter of some little importance to them to avoid casting their nets on days when but few fish were likely to put in an appearance.

Ruia had blundered several times in casting the nets in "tides without fish;" and an outsider had at last advised him to wait on more than one occasion when he had proclaimed a fishing day; worse, had proved to be in the right by the want of success of the obstinate fishing party; and, worst of all, had had the presumption to proclaim fishing days without Ruia's sanction, and return with the canoes loaded with fish.

The individual who had thus embittered the old man's life was now standing beside him, looking at him with good humoured contempt. After a long contemplation of the chief fisherman, Ngawhare seized him by the arm, which he shook roughly, saying, "Friend! rise up! rise up!" The old soldier awoke at the first word, and stretched his arm towards his *taiaha* or wooden sword; but, before his hand had reached his weapon, recognizing his visitor, he drew it back, sat up, and without speaking resumed the netting slumber had interrupted.

Digitized by Google

The Tohunga made no use of his customary circumlocution. "The Ariki," said he, "would see you after the evening meal; the *Runanga* will assemble at his house."

The old hero gave a grunt which at once expressed his displeasure and his acquiescence, and the Tohunga departed. "Ah!" cogitated the old man, with a sigh of relief, pausing in his occupation, "it is well that the sorcerer is gone. I wish I had cut him down before I knew who it was! To awake me in such a rude manner! I am sure that he practises witchcraft in secret, or how could he tell a good fishing day better than me, who am an honest man, a good fisherman, and a great warrior? Well, if I cannot get at him in any other way, I can oppose him at the Runanga to night. I am sure that he is not of good descent; indeed, it is beyond doubt that a direct ancestor of his, only four generations back, was taken prisoner and carried into captivity by the Ngapuhi." The recollection of this flaw in the escutcheon of his tormentor soothed the feelings of the veteran, and he resumed his netting. Net making was the usual employment of the old men, who were assisted in it upon wet days by large numbers of both sexes and of all ages. Nothing could be more simple than the Maori fashion of making nets; the flags of the flax plant were split into strips by the finger nail, smoke-dried to make them as durable as possible, and strip by strip netted on the hand without mesh or needle. Smoke-dried though they were, however, they were not everlasting, and new nets of a large size

Digitized by Google

being constantly required, their manufacture afforded constant employment to all who were not otherwise engaged, or who were incapable of active, and more laborious work.

With the feeling of satisfaction felt by a man when he has succeeded in placing a difficult undertaking in a fair way of accomplishment, Ngawhare went in search of his devoted adherent, the melancholy Tomo. He found his friend superintending the adjustment of a long bathing plank over a deep pool, for the amusement of his wayward daughter Ora, it being a favourite pastime of the young people to run up a plank and spring from it into deep water.

Fortune had never tired of persecuting the youngest son of the reigning house. She had taken away the wife of his youth, destroyed the appearance of his face, and for fourteen years his neglected second spouse had, every alternate year, with the regularity of the seasons, made him the father of an additional daughter; while, climax to his misfortunes, the one whom he alone idolized was not as other girls were.

The plank being at last fixed in the right place, Ora rewarded the exertions of the most active of the workmen, who was no other than her own favourite but half-witted slave, Keia, by allowing him to be the first to run along the plank and jump far out into the stream, from which he emerged, declaring that whoever had told his mistress that summer had come was a fool.

"Never mind, Keia," said his mistress, "you have shown such strength and skill in fixing the spring-board

Digitized by Google

that I am going to recompense you. The canoes with the presents of baked fish leave for the upper river this evening; you shall go with them as far as the lake, where you can take a small canoe and bring back a supply of the smoke-dried eels to which I am so partial." Keia joyfully promised obedience to the commands of his young mistress, for he too was fond of smoked eels, and singing, as usual, took his way to the landing-place. Ora, tired of the pool, set out with her father and his friend, and as the three entered the village of Kauroa on their way to the fort, they passed many women busily occupied in stowing baskets of baked fish in the canoes which were about to start up the river. An exchange of presents was the commercial system of the Maoris. Those who made the presents considered that they were preforming a labour of love and generosity, but they always expected and duly received "*utu*" payment; it being considered a matter of honour to strive to return a gift of greater value than the one received. In some shape or other they were always making presents of what went by the general name of "property," such as arms, clothing, or canoes. Donations of food were generally restricted to the members of the same tribe, and no return was of course expected for the gifts received from serf tribes in the shape of tribute.

Whether the Tohunga took Tomo into his confidence is unrecorded in history, but before they separated the former doubtless satisfied himself that he could rely upon his friend's support.

As night drew on the different members of the

Digitized by Google

Runanga took their way to the old chief's house, outside whose door a *rahui*, formed of a bunch of leaves tied to the end of a stick, stuck into the ground, was ample intimation that the house was "*tapu*," and that "all admission except on business" was strictly forbidden.

The Ariki, his three sons, Ngawhare, and Ruia, seated themselves upon mats round some embers in a small fire-place, formed of four stones sunk into the ground in a square, in the centre of the house. The younger members sat in respectful silence until the old chief spoke. "Listen to me, my children," said he; "I now address the *Runanga* for the last time;" and he proceeded to repeat the story he had told Ngawhare that afternoon.

"Father, are you slain by witchcraft?" asked Karaka.

"The thought is with you; I cannot say," replied the old man.

"How say you?" said Karaka, addressing the Tohunga, who replied; "Witchcraft assumes so many shapes that no experienced man can, without long and careful investigation, say what is or what is not witchcraft."

After a long pause the Ariki resumed. "I have not called you together to settle the cause of my death; you can do that at leisure after my departure. I am not sorry to go away, for I have done my work, and I am weary; it is right that I should go. Never was the tribe stronger or better prepared for war. When we

Digitized by Google

assembled at the eel feast at Rotorua last fall, after leaving a sufficient garrison to protect this Fort, we had still two thousand pairs of warriors to dance the war dance by the banks of the lake. Our storehouses are full of fern roots, and our war canoes are numerous. But it is not to hear me boast that you are here, but to name my successor." The old chief ceased, and Ngawhare was the first to answer.

"The safety of the tribe will be secure in the care of Karaka. The conqueror of Waipuna can carry the burden." Instantly Ruia replied, "What of Waipuna? Waipuna was mere fighting in ambush. There are those present who have distinguished themselves in great battles such as Wairoa, but that is nothing. The question is not about fighting, but who is to rule the tribe here in our settlement. Karaka cannot do that better than the eldest son of his father, therefore let Karaka remain our war chief, and let Te Wira be our Ariki. The less said about Waipuna the better."

The skirmish of Waipuna to which the Tohunga had insidiously made allusion, had been entirely successful from a military point of view, but in other respects the tribe would gladly have dispensed with its results, and would fain have forgotten its memory. It had occurred some years previously. Early one morning Karaka was superintending the launching of a canoe, when a messenger, torn, bleeding, and exhausted, his appearance proclaiming disaster, arrived upon the scene. "Wait till I have finished my work," said the war chief to the messenger, with Maori dislike to leaving any-

Digitized by Google

thing unfinished, to do so being considered unlucky. In a few minutes he was at liberty to hear the messenger's story. Waipuna, the most southerly settlement of the tribe, or rather of an offshoot of the tribe, distant from seventy to eighty miles from Ngutukaka, had the preceding morning been attacked by a southern tribe, taken, and a large number of prisoners made by the the enemy. "*He tawa! He tawa!* (A war party! A war party!) Sound the war horn!" cried the chief, before the messenger had finished relating his disastrous tidings. The call to arms was joyfully repeated all round the fort. In the meantime the chief entered the Pa, and, mounting the tribune, repeated the story brought from Waipuna. Walking to and fro upon the stage as he related the news to the rapidly assembling hundreds, he proceeded: "Tomorrow, or at farthest the day after, shall be a day of battle in the south. With me shall march three hundred files, all picked men with fully tatooed faces. I want no boys in whom the sap of life is still rising, to drop from fatigue upon the road. I require active athletic men in the prime of life, for we must fly if we would overtake the enemy before he is secure in his own fortresses. Two hundred files will follow to support me, that will be sufficient." More men than he required eagerly offered themselves. Of these he rejected the oldest and the youngest, until there remained the required number of warriors, of from four or five-and-twenty to forty years of age. Within little more than an hour of the arrival of the express, the war party started, encumbered with nothing but

Digitized by Google

their arms and the few handfuls of roasted fern-root carried by every man. They proceeded at the slow run, man's substitute for a trot, which, as practised runners know, admits of being sustained for a far longer period than a quicker pace. At noon on the following day their zeal was fired by the sight of the destroyed settlement, and at sunset the tracks of their foes were so fresh, that Karaka halted his men on the northern slope of a range of hills, while he proceeded alone to reconnoitre. He discovered the hostile party encamped at the foot of the range, where they had found the two requisites for an encampment, wood and water. Returning to his warriors, who were too fatigued with their forced march to attack that evening, he waited for the night. When the darkness had set in, he crawled round his enemies, who were carousing, exulting in their success, and feasting upon the provisions they had made their prisoners carry.

He presently reached the stream to which his feasting foes were sending the captive women to fetch water; their escape being guarded against by long ropes made of strips of flax leaves attached to their wrists. Karaka revealed himself to one of these unfortunate women, and told her that on the following night he would attack the camp and release the prisoners, all of whom he begged her to warn to throw themselves flat upon the ground when they heard his war cry. The next day was spent in renewed carousal on the one side, and silent watching on the other; but, as night fell, Karaka and his warriors rushed upon the camp of their enemies,

Digitized by Google

and amply revenged the insult their tribe had received. When a Maori was taken prisoner, his friends looked upon him as dead.* The return to life of the departed is no doubt always awkward to the living; and in Maoria, moreover, the disgrace of having been a prisoner was indelible, and was handed down to the offspring of those who had suffered this last indignity. The recovery of the prisoners was therefore by no means so acceptable to the tribe as the slaughter of their enemies, and an allusion to the battle fought on the southern border after the destruction of Waipuna was no pleasant subject of conversation at Ngutukaka, where but one word was used when the two surprises were indiscreetly brought to memory.

Again the Tohunga spoke. "Friends! the talk of Ruia is straight. Let the eldest son succeed his father. Te Wira shall be our Ariki, and Karaka his right hand, as he is that of his father. Te Wira is thoughtful, generous, brave, and calm: he shall be our ruler; we cannot find his superior."

Tomo followed suit, and strongly supported the claims of Te Wira to succeed his father.

"No!" said Te Wira, "it is not right that I should undertake duties for which another is better qualified than I am. I know that I think too much of what is and what is not. I am a dreamer, and my brother is a man of action, judgment and determination; as a warrior, whether as a leader or a man-at-arms, the whole river has not his equal. He shall be our Ariki." Among no race were the ties of blood relationship so

* note 4. page 193.

Digitized by Google

strong as they used to be in Maoria; not even among the sons of Israel, from whom, as we have observed, some are of opinion the Maoris are descended. Uncles and aunts were "fathers" and "mothers," cousins were "brothers" and "sisters," and ties of kindred were traced with a minuteness no herald's college could have surpassed. Karaka loved his brother with a deep and tender regard, which was not diminished, that, in his secret heart, he thought him a dreamer wanting in decision; and his affection would not allow him to be exceeded in generosity. "No, my brother," said he, "you undervalue yourself. I salute you as the successor of our father. I would not have it otherwise, and it shall be so." This, coming from a man of the determined character of Karaka, settled the question of the succession.

The old man was disappointed, but felt powerless, for he knew that no "last word" would alter the determination of his second son. "Then it must be so," said he with a sigh; "Te Wira, in two days time you will be the Ariki of the tribe. I would be alone."

The *Runanga* rose, the Tohunga exulting in his secret heart at the success of the machinations by which he had secured the prolongation of his influence, and which he looked upon as the triumph of superior intellect. The discomfited Ruia felt quite confused by the, to him, unexpected turn affairs had taken. He felt that in some way or other, though how he could not fathom, the Tohunga had made a fool of him; and he speedily sought his home that his wife Moni might unravel a

Digitized by Google

web which was beyond his comprehension. Moni was a stout, round-faced, nimble old lady, whose restless beady eyes showed her own activity of temperament. She was that night too full of her own troubles to listen to her husband until she had unburdened her mind. "Ruia, listen to me," said the old lady. "I have had such trouble to day! You know my servant girl Peka, whom you gave me when she was a child, on your return from the east coast *tawa*. She had grown to be a strong girl and was very useful to me. But she was very conceited, and I suspected our son of casting eyes at her. Well, to-day I set her to pound fern-root, but she was above her work and did not half pound it; and when I reprimanded her she was impudent, and asked me if I could pound it better myself. So I told her to lay her hand on the block and I would pound that. The first blow only broke some of her fingers; but I should have forgiven her if she had not given me more of her impertinence, so I pounded away and beat her hand till it was like a jelly-fish, when she became quite quiet, and did not say another word. But what do you think? Shortly afterwards she slipped away to the *tapu totara* trees and threw herself over the precipice. Did you ever hear of such impertinence as that of a slave girl presuming to kill herself at the very spot where so many distinguished people have taken the leap to Te Reigna?" Ruia held his peace about his own perplexity, for the old lady was clearly in a state of mind to receive rather than to administer comfort.

On the following morning express canoes started for

Digitized by Google

the settlements up the river, and messengers were sent inland to announce the approaching death of the Ariki from witchcraft, and to carry a general invitation to all members of the tribe to come to Ngutukaka to witness the departure of their chief. Rumour generally ascribed the illness of the old man to a distant and hostile tribe, who were said to possess the deepest secrets of the black art. Some, who thought that they knew more than their fellows, hinted, rather by signs than by words, that Maire, the master of the eel weir at Rotorua, practised witchcraft, and was supposed to have caused the death of many of the tribe. But neither rumour nor the knowing ones were right; the culprit was nearer at hand, and after the death of the chief was made known by his own confession.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

In the open air the Maori entered life; in the much loved open air he spent his existence; and in the open air his spirit took its departure from the mortal tenement it had inhabited. The field of battle was considered the most fitting death-bed for a warrior, failing which, the more sudden his departure the better pleased, or perhaps we should say, the less grieved were his friends. A lingering illness was deprecated as entailing useless pain and trouble upon the sufferer and his family; and, above all things, death within doors was avoided, for the departing spirit would thereby have felt insulted, "cribbed, cabined, and confined."

On the day Te Au O Te Rangi had appointed for his death, a great concourse assembled in the public square of the fort. Rotorua and the other settlements of the tribe had sent forth their chief warriors to pay the last honours due to a great chief by witnessing his departure. So many parties of dis-

Digitized by Google

tinguished visitors had arrived, that the residents of Ngutukaka had exhausted themselves in dancing war-dances; every party arriving on a solemn state occasion expecting to be received by the women waving green boughs and crying Come! Come! Welcome! Welcome! and by the men performing a war-dance of welcome: the visitors dancing in their turn, and striving to the uttermost to outvie their hosts in the display of strength, grace, time, and agility. The residents therefore felt a natural relief when they could see no more canoes coming down the river, and when the time for high water was at hand, the moment the chief had named for his departure to Te Reigna.

All were assembled when the Ariki, robed in the finest shawl-like garments, and his hair decorated with the feathers of the white crane, was carried, reclining upon a litter, into the public square. Four days illness had worked but little change in the appearance of the abstemious old man, and unless he himself had announced it, no one would have thought that he was about to die. Around him stood his three sons, and several of his old companions in arms, the bearers of his litter; and all were hushed in the deepest silence in the expectation of hearing the last address of the great man departing. Twice he unsuccessfully essayed to rise, then motioning to Karaka, with his assistance he stood erect. Stretching forth his right hand, in which he grasped his *mere*, he spoke—"My children, I have fought since I was the height of my shoulder, and I die with my *mere* in my hand. Would that I

Digitized by Google

could expire upon the field of battle. Follow my example; abhor peace and luxury, love virtue and war; be ever vigilant and prepared for battle, and take payment for the slightest insult. Farewell, my children! Farewell!" All responded by a wailing cry as he sank down exhausted.

Nothing could have been more appropriate to the feelings of his audience than the words he had just uttered, and his chiefs and visitors exchanged glances of satisfaction and admiration. But they were premature in their mute congratulations. All was not, as they supposed, over. Suddenly the old man rose without assistance, and exclaimed in a voice of deep distress, "My children! beware! beware of the Great Sea. Alas! alas! the grief of my heart!" As the last word passed his lips he fell back and expired, and a deep groan of lamention arose from the awe-struck multitude.

The death of the chief was the signal for thousands of voices to join in the *tangi* for the dead, the old women cutting themselves with shells, and, while the blood was flowing, singing songs of lamentation in the sensuous language of Hawaiki. Most of the younger women had good excuse to avoid this ordeal in attending to the wants of the living. Many visitors were present, and more were expected to arrive. All present belonged to or were related to the Ngatiroa tribe; but visitors from a distance might now be expected to pay a visit of condolence, and to see the remains of the dead chief, which, for that purpose, were to lie in state as long as possible.

Digitized by Google

The corpse arrayed in the finest shawls, never to be again used, the *mere* of command in its hand, was placed in a temporary building in the public square; for no dwelling in which it had rested could again be inhabited; and there, all day long, visitors from a distance wept before and bade adieu to the inanimate clay, which they vainly imagined felt gratified, in some unknown manner, by the attentions paid to it. The number of mourners was certainly not diminished by the mystical warning uttered with the last breath of the departed chief. While some of the visitors were lamenting, others, noted orators, mounted the stage or tribune in front of the building in which the body reposed in state, and exhausted their art in complimentary speeches upon the great qualities of the late ruler; and his companions in arms, with the self complacency of old soldiers, related their joint achievements in battles now enveloped in the mist of half a century of oral tradition, and enjoyed to the utmost the temporary importance they derived from their old fellowship in war with the illustrious deceased. Deputations from all the kindred tribes arrived to pay their last tokens of respect, and even the tribe of the Great Central Lake sent down its chiefs and women of the highest rank to attend the funeral ceremony.

The men of the far-off southern tribe wore the usual mourning head-dresses formed of leaves of the *mahoe* or of those of other trees devoted to this purpose; and most of their women displayed a profusion of the rare feathers of the *huia* and the *kakasso*, never seen so far

Digitized by Google

north before in such profusion. Others wore what few of those present had ever seen at all, the long, coarse, hair-like, dark green feathers of the *moa*, that great bird being even then extinct in the north and centre of the Island. The leg bones of this enormous biped were sometimes carried as weapons by chiefs upon occasions of state, but their brittleness forbade their being used in actual war; a fact well established at the expense of those who had been tempted to make the experiment.

The last and the least expected guests were a deputation from the Great Northern Tribe, with whom the Ngatiroa had had but little intercourse for three generations, since the day an exhaustive war had forced both tribes to accept peace from utter prostration. Since then, the intercourse between the tribes had been limited to presents carried by slaves or persons of no importance. The deputation of the Rarawa were therefore received with marked distinction. On their approach they had sent forward a herald to announce their arrival; and when, a few hours afterwards, they were seen wending their way along the beach on the north side of the Waitebuna, an unusual stir moved the Southerners assembled in Ngutukaka. Nine men formed the advancing party, which was rejoined, while yet on the north side of the river, by its herald bearing assurances of welcome. Of the very small number advancing, six carried *pikau* or back-loads, a certain sign that they were slaves or persons of no account. The deputation therefore, in Maori opinion, consisted

Digitized by Google

of four persons only, and those to whom it was sent were divided in their estimation of the prudence of their late enemies in sending so small a number into danger, and of the latter's temerity in venturing into the shark's mouth. Peace had never been formally made with the Rarawa; custom, therefore, would not have been outraged by the slaughter of the deputation, but the Northern Tribe, in selecting their ambassadors, had hit the happy medium of neither tempting their late enemies by the envoy of men of great name and rank, or of offending them by sending mere nobodies; so killing being negatived, dancing and feasting were the order of the day.

The importance of the occasion called the stentorian lungs of Ruia into play, and he having proclaimed, as the mouthpiece of the *Runanga*, that the approaching embassy would be received at Kauroa, a general rush was made to the river. Half-a-dozen of the largest canoes, fully manned, put off to bring over the strangers; while Karaka marshalled his men about a quarter of a mile from the beach. As the visitors ascended the bank, the war chief of the Ngatiroa, stationed at his usual post, the centre of the left flank, gave the word to advance; and raising the refrain of a war song, his army advanced to welcome the strangers. Arms and weapons were raised, voices and feet kept time, and the ground literally shook under the tread of the advancing human avalanche, which seemed bent upon sweeping into the sea the tiny cluster of its enemies. Not till they had reached within a few feet of the embassy did

Digitized by Google

the word of command from their leader bring the Ngatiroa down upon one knee, panting like chained animals eager to spring upon their prey.

At a signal from Karaka the reception terminated; and the army moved away by divisions under their own chiefs, for all the southern visitors had joined in giving the northern ambassadors an imposing reception, wishing to impress them with a high opinion of their number and discipline. The ambassadors having been duly cried over and saluted by rubbing noses, Karaka led them to the Fort; where, as in courtesy bound, they shed floods of tears in front of the corpse, which they had come so far to honour. On the following day the body of the dead chief was carried into the forest and placed in a hollow *rata* tree, there to remain for three or four years; after which lapse of time the bones would be exhumed with great ceremony, wept over, and finally deposited in a cave in the mountains.

Karaka, he involuntarily often took the lead, having seen the remains of his father deposited in their temporary resting place, was at liberty to attend to the investigation of the rumoured causes of the chief's death.

Some fifteen miles inland from Ngutukaka lived a small serf-tribe dependant on the Ngatiroa. They were descendants of the *moa* hunters, the aborigines of Maoria; and some of them, who had attended the obsequies of Te Au O Te Rangi, had asserted that Pihoe (the lark), their head man, laid claim to having accomplished the death of the late chief by witchcraft. Strange as it may appear, a Maori very seldom kept

Digitized by Google

silence as to matters in which he was personally concerned, and yet never betrayed a tribal secret. Notwithstanding the penalties attached to incontinence, it was frequently a race between the guilty parties which should be the first to disclose their secret intercourse, and in the present case, though death would assuredly be the punishment, the doer boasted of his deed.

The morning succeeding the funeral, Karaka, spear in hand, started for Pihoe's settlement. For some miles his path lay up the gorge of the Mohaka stream; then striking into one of the ravines, which, with something like regularity, descended to the stream upon either hand, it led him through a dense damp underwood of tree-ferns and miniature cocoanut trees. Passing through these he soon reached a more level country where the trees were larger, and where the ground was encumbered with less underwood.

The sun was still low when his feet emerged upon a small clearing, where advantage had been taken of an oasis of fern, a few acres in extent, to form a small settlement. Upon a knoll in the open ground, stood six or seven houses, secure in their insignificance and in the protection of the neighbouring fortress, to which the *hapu* or sept were tributaries. The entire piece of open ground was either preparing for, or had been under cultivation. The time for planting the *kumira* was near at hand, and "the family" (*hapu*), men and women, were busily employed, wooden spade in hand, turning over the soil and exterminating the fern root. The children of the settlement were equally busy at

Digitized by Google

play or lessons, with the inevitable spear for their copy book, when Karaka appeared, and with unmoved stony face gazed upon what the scene would never again display—at any rate for long years—happy homes, thriving industry, and the sports of childhood.

As soon as Karaka was seen and recognised, he was joyfully saluted and welcomed.

"Come hither! come hither! Our Chief, our Master, come hither! welcome! welcome!" and the women ran to prepare the delicate food, which they, as in duty bound, had hoarded in case any of their masters should perchance visit their retreat. Pihoe did not wait to be summoned but came forth to meet his chief. He was a tall spare man, considerably darker than the generality of Maoris, many of whom were of an olive complexion. Pihoe's skin, hair, and features declared him to be of a different race to that of his master, to whom he was merely a serf of the land; though the amalgamation, or rather the conquest, of the aborigines had been so complete that they had come to be looked upon as having been gradually transformed into an inferior order of Maoris by the infusion of a proportion of their conqueror's blood. In the case of Pihoe and his unfortunate relatives, their black skins, flat features, and crisp curly hair unmistakably showed that their Papuan blood had been but little sweetened or ameliorated by that of the Pacific Islands.

"Pihoe," said the chief, "I am told that you affirm that you caused the death of the Ariki by witchcraft?"

"Who told you so?"

Digitized by Google

"Your own people said so."

"Yes!" said Pihoe, "it is true; I did bewitch the Ariki."

"Why did you so?"

"Because he called me 'a lazy fellow' without cause. The winter of last year was very severe; storms of wind and rain followed one another with no intervals of fine weather, the snares we placed upon the trees and upon the tracks were destroyed, and we caught few birds, and almost no rats. We delivered at the Fort all the latter (the edible forest rat, the only indigenous quadruped on the Island, was considered a great delicacy), all the *kakasso*, and half the *kiwis*, wood pigeons, ducks, and other birds we succeeded in trapping; retaining for our own use the other half, to which you know we have the right for ever and ever. When the spirits of the air and of the water destroyed our snares and there was little game taken, that was not our fault; yet the Ariki sent for me and told me that I was a lazy fellow. I therefore determined to bewitch him. I was more than a year before I succeeded. I failed last year, but at last I have been successful. You know the rest; that is all I have to say."

"Have you finished?"

"Yes."

A thrust of the spear passed through the unresisting man as if he had been a figure formed of reeds, such as the children were accustomed to set up for a target; and the troubles and the occupations of the unsuccessful

Digitized by Google

birdcatcher were ended. Not so those of the relatives he left behind him, who, terror-stricken, had witnessed his execution without dreaming of assisting him, or of attempting to avert their own fate.

Karaka having partaken of the food set before him, ordered the miserable sept to assemble. This they did, thinking that the death of the man they had reverenced as their chief balanced all accounts. But they were deceived, for, in place of an address such as they usually received upon the rare occasions of one of their master's visiting their settlement, commanding them to be industrious and to pay their dues with regularity, the relentless war chief ordered them to follow him to Ngutukaka. Man prefers to suffer in company to suffering alone. The men might have made their escape into the forest, and singly, or in small parties have eked out their existence; yet not one of them attempted it, all preferring to meet their fate in the company of those whose companionship they valued more than life itself.

Upon their arrival at Ngutukaka the miserable band of nearly forty men, women and children, were horrified to find themselves presented to the Rarawa ambassadors, who felt much elated at the receipt of so considerable a gift. Irrevocable fate admitted of no remonstrance, and the following day the unfortunate wretches commenced their journey northwards under their new masters, who looked upon them in the light of domestic slaves. These were usually prisoners taken in a *tawa*, which was sometimes undertaken solely with the view

Digitized by Google

of their acquisition. The lives of slaves were painfully dependent and laborious, and they seldom reared any children, being unwilling to transmit their unhappy position to their posterity. Servile septs, on the other hand, possessed comparative independence. They paid tribute, and accompanied their masters to war rather as carriers than as fighting men. Still they did engage in battle, and instances had occurred of serfs by their bravery and good fortune rising to high position. But the crime of which Pihoe had declared himself guilty was one of unprecedented magnitude; hence the severity of the punishment.

The first funeral ceremonies in honour of the departed Ariki being now terminated, the rest of the visitors left without any ceremonious leave taking. The tears shed upon their arrival were not renewed upon their departure, and the parting guests left with merely the customary adieus from those who chanced to be on the spot. "Go in peace!" "Remain at rest!" Esau and Jacob wept when they met, and those of us who have left our homes early in life may have been greeted with tears upon our first return. Upon our second departure the sympathetic drops may have been as scarce as they were at the leave takings of the patriarch and his brother, or at those of the Maoris, who looked upon such incidents as the separation of friends and relations as the inevitable lot of man, natural links in the chains of their lives best left untarnished by the outpourings of affection. Meetings of friends were considered more than a sufficient solace

Digitized by Google

for the pangs of absence, and tears were shed more from the joy of reunion than from sorrow for the loss of those who had departed during the interval of separation.

The ordinary business of life was now resumed at Ngutukaka; the Ariki, the war chief, the members of the *Runanga*, the warriors who formed the adult male population, all returned to their labours. In Maoria no sort of work was considered degrading, even to a chief, except the carrying of a load upon the back. This, indeed, was left to the young lads, women, and slaves. It was a distinction to be a skilful workman; and the higher descriptions of work, such as the carving of canoes and weapons, the designing and making ornaments of green jade by the process of rubbing one stone against another with sand and water sprinkled between them, a labour which would have exhausted the patience of Job, were generally performed by men of rank who had passed the prime of life; while net-making, as we have said, supplied an unfailing resource to the old people who in other countries would have been considered past work. It never entered the primitive mind of Maoria to conceive that it was honourable to lead a life of inaction. On the contrary, idleness was repudiated, and to be called "a lazy fellow" was to suffer a grave insult, and might, as we have seen, entail serious consequences. The Maoris would have said that all education was comprised in physical training, but those whose taste led them to exercise their brains as well as their muscles,

Digitized by Google

found ample scope in learning the thousand traditions of Hawaiki and Maoria. Indeed, not to be a genealogist was, in a person of birth, considered disgraceful.

The night frosts, which in the early spring were so destructive to an exotic like the sweet potato, being nearly over, all betook themselves to the preparation of the *kumira* grounds. At the expiration of the morning meal, long lines of cheerful workers were to be seen descending from the Fort and wending their way to the plantations; the men with a weapon in the one hand and a spade, axe, or rake, in the other. Their first care was to burn the brushwood, which had been long cut and allowed to dry thoroughly. The land was then dug with long-pointed spades; every stump and root was in its turn carefully consumed; the stones, if few in number, were collected in heaps, if numerous, were built into walls to shelter the soil; and the ground, after being thoroughly broken into fine garden mould, was ready to receive the seed potatoes, provided it was light soil. Heavy stiff soil required to be mixed with sand; and, as this was necessary near Ngutukaka, trains of women and slaves were all day long engaged in carrying baskets of sand from the beach to the plantations.

As all laboured, however, the long day's toil, a necessary evil where there is an idle class and a labouring class, was unknown; and before sunset all had returned to the Fort, the women carrying home loads of firewood upon their backs.

The labour of the day was nearly concluded, when a

Digitized by Google

solitary wayfarer, who had made his way to Ngutukaka by one of the inland tracks, presented himself before Ora, his mistress, as she was looking at some young girls who were busily employed striving to finish a piece of ground before the time to leave off arrived. Ora was not doing much, though she was probably under the impression that she was assisting her companions. For once, Keia, the laugher par excellence of Ngutukaka, was not laughing; and a more forlorn figure could not be conceived than the stout, dark, half-witted slave as he stood silent before his mistress, his hands extended and clasped in front of him, as if praying for forgiveness. So absorbed was he that the solitary garment he possessed, a tattered old seal skin, was not worn in its place round his waist but was carelessly thrown over the left shoulder.

"Speak to me, fool!" said the young lady, "where are the eels?"

"The eels?"

"Yes, the eels."

"Listen to me, and you shall hear," said the repentant emissary.

A Maori, telling a story, invariably commenced from the earliest period, and proceeded chronologically with his adventures, without omitting even the most trivial incidents. We shall therefore skip a considerable portion of Keia's narrative.

"I left," proceeded Keia, "in the fastest of our canoes which went up the river on the first day of the fishing season. There were three of us in the canoe,

Digitized by Google

myself, Awarihi, and Whana. We left in the afternoon, and pulled all night. In the morning we stopped at a village and swallowed food; then we started again. I was not sleepy, but my companions were, so Whana said, 'The west wind is following us; cannot we hoist a sail, and then we can sleep while Keia steers?' Awarihi answered, 'This is a pulling canoe, there are no holes in her sides in which to fasten the stays of the mast, and we have no tool but an adze.' Whana replied, 'Keia is a brave man, he shall give us a front tooth to bore holes in the sides for the stays.' They persuaded me to agree to this, and Awarihi held my head between his knees, while Whana punched out my tooth with the stone blade of the adze. The pain made me cry, but they laughed at me, and said that if they had not been very careful I should have lost both my front teeth. Then they cut a sapling, and, with my tooth fixed on a stick for a borer, and a piece of flax to turn it, made holes in the sides of the canoe. With a mat for a sail we ran before the wind. I steered the canoe while they slept. In the afternoon we reached the Rotorua River, and they woke up, and we soon pulled into the lake and reached the Pa. The next day, when we heard the news that the Ariki had made up his mind to go away and leave us, many prepared to go down the river to Ngutukaka. I did not wish to go, because my head was swelled and I was crying with the pain in my jaw. In a day or two I was better, and I thought that you would be longing for eels; so I went to Maire, the guardian of the eel weir, and told

Digitized by Google

him that I had come for smoked eels for you. Maire was angry, and replied, 'One, two, three, four, five times have you come to me for smoked eels for your mistress, how is this?' I replied, 'My mistress likes eels, and so she eats them; who has a better right to the eels of Rotorua than the daughter of Riwihutia and Tomo?' Te Maire answered crossly, 'Au!' Then he told me to go to the store and take what I required. I went, and made a back load of a hundred couple; for I had determined not to return by water for fear that some sleepy fellows might persuade me to part with the other front tooth. I left Rotorua the same day, for I was frightened at having answered Maire, whom you know every one is afraid of. I did not go far that day, and I did not touch the eels; at night I stopped at Puketutu, where there was plenty of food. The next morning they gave me a small basket of cooked *kumiras* to take with me; but they forgot to put a *kinaki* (a relish) in with them, and I thought that you would not know, unless I told you, that I had eaten a few of the eels; but when I had begun to eat them, I could not stop myself. I ate all that day as I walked along, I ate all the next day; I went on eating them till this morning: and now I declare that there is not one left! Shall I go back and get some more? I am more afraid of you than I am of Te Maire—indeed I am."

The speedy chastisement she proceeded to inflict with the first stick she could find was his mistress's answer, and its vigour showed that it was not without reason

Digitized by Google

that Keia was afraid of her anger. Having thus relieved her feelings, Ora announced her intention of proceeding to Rotorua in the canoe of her friend Ngawhare, who had accepted a pressing invitation to visit the Lake. She would then, she said, assert her right to send for as many eels as she pleased. Much persuasion had been necessary to induce Ngawhare to consent to pay a professional visit to Rotorua. He had refused to return with the visitors, but had promised to follow them in a few days. In spite of his assumed reluctance, the Tohunga, however, was by no means averse to making a trip to Rotorua as soon as he had had a sufficiency of fishing; for since his last visit to the Lake his peace of mind had been much disturbed by visions of a stately young widow, whom he had consequently determined to add to the number of his wives, if the addition could be effected without too much trouble.

Ngawhare having announced his intention of starting up the river, his family and admirers did their part in seeing that his large and commodious canoe, Te Toke, was well found in "*mataetai*," as produce of the sea is generally termed. They filled Te Toke with dried and baked fish, and mussels strung upon strings or strips of flax, in which state they keep for months. To be sure, the traveller upon his return would, as a matter of course, bring with him a share of the good things of this life appertaining to the quarter whence he came. It is a fine thing to belong to the great ones of this world, even in barbarous Maoria, for there, no less than in civilized London, unto those who have much is

Digitized by Google

much given, and unto those who have nothing nought is meted out but six feet of earth in which to put them away out of sight.

Ngawhare did not follow the visitors from Rotorua for some days. In the first place he was fond of fishing, an art in which he excelled, and fish had been biting freely. However, the wind at last settled in a fine airt, the weather became too clear for fishing, and being satisfied that there was no danger of himself, the ladies who travelled under his care, or his provisions suffering from even a passing shower, the Tohunga took his place in the stern of Te Toke (the worm), and hoisting or rather ordering others to hoist the large sail, he left Ngutukaka on the top of the young flood. With a fine south-west wind, Te Toke rapidly passed the sand-banks a little above the fortress, from which canoes were returning laden with *pipis,* a small shell fish which formed a very important article of diet. The banks were inexhaustible, but for several years they had been "*tapu.*" The late Ariki had "tapued" the *pipi* banks under the pretext that they had been overworked, and required time to recover; but in reality because parties from the Tribes up the river had been working the banks in a manner, which, in process of time, would have given them a positive right to do so whenever they thought proper. Te Wira, at the general wish, had removed the *tapu,* and *pipis* were again plentiful in Ngutukaka. *Pipis* are collected by canoes working in pairs, each pair having a large many-pronged fork, which the occupant of one canoe thrusts into the sand

Digitized by Google

while his companion hauls it out with a rope, raising the shell fish which cling to the fork. The numerous mounds, many feet in thickness, of *pipi* shells which are found near the sites of the old settlements, show the extent to which this little bivalve was used. The *pipi* banks, once passed, gave place to low reed-clad islands, succeeded in their turn by those bearing a higher order of vegetation; and before the limits of the flood tide were reached, the islands and banks of the panoramic progression were covered with vegetation of tropical luxuriance. The shallow soil of the islets sustained umbrageous trees whose branches hung down over the stream until they concealed their parent stems and appeared to grow out of the water. The character of the vegetation and the absence of man would have reminded the Tohunga, had he ever seen them, of the Soonderbunds, that great desert of jungle and water formed by the mouths of the Ganges. But on the banks of the Waitebuna there was neither lurking snake, crocodile, or tiger to be dreaded. There was nothing to cause alarm except the imaginary terrors with which man had invested some of the islands. One was extensively used as a burial ground, and on its melancholy shores only a funeral party would have cared to land. But to explain the reasons why some of the others were *tapu*, would have puzzled most of those who would not have trod their soil even to escape the risk of being drowned. The Tohunga, an adept in these mysteries, could easily, however, have unfolded them; while in his secret heart he, perhaps, despised and held them in

Digitized by Google

derision, though with truly human inconsistency he omitted no occasion of practising them.

The day was so genial that the proposal to bathe was hailed by general acclamation; and one of the islands was selected, under the banks of which there were some eel-holes in hollow trees which had sunk and fixed themselves in the bottom of the river. Diving for eels was a favourite sport, and in summer time the young men spent days pulling about in canoes, diving at the different *rua*, for every hole in which an eel was likely to have made his home was perfectly well known. The diver, holding in his hand a large fish-hook, made of sperm whalebone, to which a few feet of cord were attached, plunged where he knew of the existence of an eel-hole, and if he found his prey at home, invited it to accompany him to the upper air by inserting the hook as deeply into his flesh as possible.

Two fine fish had rewarded the exertions of the divers, and had been consigned to the *hangi*, which had been heated in anticipation of their appearance, when the Tohunga asked if any one had searched the log under the *puriri*-tree at the bottom of the island. On being answered in the negative, he remarked;

"Perhaps there is a large fish there; who will give an account of it?"

Either the divers were tired, or for some other reason no one felt inclined to renew the sport. The Tohunga, therefore, spoke again, and addressing by name a stout young fellow, a servant of his own, said;

"Papahua, is it not good that you should go and prevent the large fish being wasted?"

Digitized by Google

At this command the slave, in no very good humour, resumed his hook and line, which he fastened round his waist; and, as the easiest way of reaching the *rua* at the bottom of the island, plunged into the water.

The divers had refreshed themselves by nearly an hour's sleep, and the women were about to draw the oven, when Ngawhare asked;

"Where is Papahua?"

He had not returned. His master immediately told two young men to go down to the *rua* and see what had happened, emphatically enjoining them to touch nothing. They soon returned, and reported that the unfortunate diver had hooked a great eel; at least they supposed so, for he lay dead upon the log, to which he was tightly lashed by the line he had incautiously fastened round his waist.

"Did you touch the body?" demanded the Tohunga;—for contact with a corpse made a man unclean (*tapu* again) for a time, and a person in that state would have defiled his travelling companions.

"No; you told us not to touch anything."

"Then you acted wisely. Papahua has attacked a *taniwha*, which has killed him, and which would have killed you too, had you interfered."

Ngawhare then ordered them all into the canoe, directing them to leave upon the island the food they had landed, and the clothes they were wearing.

This being done, he directed the canoe to be pulled a short distance into the stream, leaving himself the last person upon the island. He then stripped off his

Digitized by Google

garment, which he hung conspicuously upon a pole for a *rahui;* and, having finished his incantations, plunged into the stream and swam to the canoe, secretly congratulating himself that the accident had happened to a person of no consequence; for had the drowned man been a personage of importance, his body must have been recovered, to the inconvenience of the living in general, and of himself in particular, for he truly hated being put out of his way. The compliment of "tapuing" the island, which in a few days would be known throughout the length of the river, was a sort of joint tribute to himself and to the eel, or *taniwha,* who had gained the victory; the loss of a servant being an incident of no importance whatever.

In Maori economy, the eel played a most important part. More than every other kind of food it represented fat, the nutriment which man, whether savage or civilized, universally craves. The beauty of Belgravia, and the Brahmin of Benares, would alike waste and pine were they deprived of milk and butter, pastry and sweetmeats. They must both eat fat in some shape or other. In Maori there were no animals deserving the name of quadrupeds. Man was therefore forced to gratify his craving for fat at the expense of a lower order of creation. Fish was his staple article of diet, and of all fish the eel was to him of the greatest importance. For its capture he executed engineering marvels only surpassed by those he erected to protect himself from his fellow-man. He cut canals leading from the lakes that he might have water-

Digitized by Google

courses in which to place his elaborate stake-nets; and on these and on the lake's natural outlets, he built eel-weirs of so gigantic a size, and of such durable timber, that they remain to this day; monuments of the work, man, in the stone age, was capable of performing. Of the *manga manga*, he made the most beautiful and durable eel-pots ever seen; and though our imperfect knowledge restricts us to but one name for the whole species, the Maori had nearly twenty appellations for the different varieties of this delicacy, for the right of catching which he was ready to fight as for one of his most valued possessions. The short course of the Rotorua is nearly at right angles with that of the great river into which it falls. On its banks the presence of man was far more marked than on those of the main stream, and amongst the many traces of his hand, the numerous eel-weirs were the most conspicuous. The Tohunga's canoe soon reached the first of these, which in the shape of the letter V crossed the stream, leaving a small opening at its apex to admit of the passage of canoes.

Upon the bank stood the fortified village of the proprietors of the weir, small compared to those at the upper or lake end of the little river. Ngawhare's party passed through fourteen of these weirs before it reached the weir and Pa of the Ngatiroa, at the entrance of the lake. This was indeed a stupendous work for the primitive workmanship of the stone age. Most of the timbers—as big as an Indiaman's maintop mast—were made of the imperishable *konaka* wood,

Digitized by Google

and stood as close together as it was possible to drive them into the river-bed. The weir's right wing extended fully four hundred yards into the lake; and the left was nearly of the same dimensions. The possession of this envied eel-weir was the undisputed right of the Ngatiroa, so long as they were strong enough to hold it against all comers, but no longer. This right, however, had not for several generations been put to the test; though the powerful tribe of the Patupo, which held the next weir and Pa, asserted among themselves that they had been, and would again be, the owners of the upper Pa. Divisions of these two tribes held also most of the Pa's lower down the stream. Beyond the eel-weirs the long Rotorua lake stretched far away to the west; narrow and deep where the hills upon either side defined its course, full of swamps and lagoons where the receding shores allowed it to extend its shallower waters. The chief village of the Ngatiroa was built upon a rising ground slightly below the eel-weir, and somewhat disagreeably close to it was the Pa of the Patupo. The large weirs of these rival tribes were both very valuable; but those lower down were comparatively of little account, and were held principally for the purpose of enabling their owners to boast of the possession of a fishery on the celebrated Rotorua; for, in point of fact, the value of their takes was insufficient to keep them in repair. The upper weir also possessed the almost exclusive benefit of the mullet fishery, without mention of which a description of Rotorua would be incomplete. Upon

Digitized by Google

a fine day, when a southerly wind was blowing, a motionless figure would invariably be seen seated upon the top of one of the posts which formed the doorway of the exit from the first weir, watching a round bag-net inserted between the posts, or rather watching the shoals of mullet playing about the entrance to the lake. Suddenly a cloud of fish would dart out of the lake, and the fisherman would twitch up his net, his patience rewarded by the capture of some of the finest mullet in the world. They are, if possible, too fine, nearly as long as a man's arm, and lined with fat, like the prize pigs in a cattle show. They are, indeed, too rich to be eaten. The question may be asked, from whence do they come? They are larger and fatter than any sea mullet. As well might we ask whence come the myriads of Rotorua silver eels, which give celebrity to the lake? At all times after rain the latter leave the lake in numbers; but during the first autumn floods they leave in shoals, and are taken in immense quantities. Towards the end of summer, when the lake was at its lowest, every preparation for the coming eel-fishing was completed; every worn post was removed, and divers filled the interstices of the sunken beams with the pith of a water plant. With the first heavy rain in autumn the eels made their first move, and the master of the eel-weir, the dreaded Maire, gave the welcome order to put down the huge bag—a net made as strong and as close as strips of flax could be netted. It was lifted every hour during the night, and its contents poured into the

Digitized by Google

canoes moored ready to receive them. The eels, which were all of one size and appearance, bright silver eels of about eighteen inches in length, were cured, eaten, or sent away as presents, on the following day.

Often as the divers stopped the orifices between the posts, numbers of the migratory shoals would still force their way through, and go to reward the exertions of the fishermen at the weirs lower down the stream.

The party of the Tohunga found that they had not arrived an hour too soon. The residents of the lake had arrived some days before them, and an interesting duel upon the tapis had been postponed till the arrival of the visitors from Ngutukaka. A more delicate compliment to the Tohunga could not have been conceived than restraining the public impatience for several days upon his account. Postponing a "battue," pending the expectant arrival of a Royal Highness, is only postponing an amusement the monotony of which has wearied most of the performers; but an exhibition in the arena, whether a combat of gladiators, a bull fight, or a public tournament—for such the Maoris considered a duel—ever presents new and exciting features. Besides, the blood shed in the arena is so much more exciting than that of the tame beasts massacred at the covert side, and public impatience could not have been longer restrained out of compliment to any man living; not even to gratify the great Tohunga, whom all wished to conciliate, and who, from his infirmity of contracting marriages, was connected with all the most powerful tribes of the River.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

THE written laws of the Persians and the Medes, the arbitrary emanations from the brains of despots, executed by courtly chamberlains and obsequious ministers of justice, were less freely and willingly obeyed than were the customs, traditions, and oral laws of the Maoris enforced by the sovereign will of the people. Had it been otherwise, anarchy must have overcome order among a people whose every unit was trained to the use of arms.

The ordeal of public battle by single combat was the recognized course for the redress of private injuries, supplemented in many cases by damages levied upon the offending party, and in some instances, upon his relatives.

Woman was the most frequent cause of duelling; even an immodest glance being a sufficient cause for inflicting a little blood-letting upon its recipient. Injuries in some way or other connected with land

Digitized by Google

were the next most prolific motive of these affairs of honour, looked upon with so much favour. A trespass upon a piece of "tapued" ground, even if accidental, subjected the offender to the chance of having a hole pierced through him, and himself and his relations to being heavily mulcted by those interested in the *tapu*. The plea of ignorance or accident was never for a moment entertained, or even thought of. It mattered not how or why a man had done anything; he had to take the consequences of his act. Limited liability was unknown; and ingenious excuses, such as those invented by railway directors to shirk their liability for accidents, caused by the carelessness of their servants or the recklessness of their own management, would have ensured those making them ample opportunities for practising the noble art of self-defence with the spear. To invent an excuse for an inflicted injury was considered an aggravation of the crime. While stating the two most frequent causes of duelling, and even of war, to be quarrels about land and about women, we must not in justice forget that insulting language, still the reason of so many duels upon the Continent of Europe, was never a cause of quarrel and bloodshed amongst these barbarians, whose language did not even possess a curse until one was invented out of a mixture of Maori and English. Custom so governed the practice of duelling, that, while it was encouraged, it was at the same time restrained. A person in the constant habit of requiring the assistance of his friends would have been considered an intolerable

Digitized by Google

nuisance, and means would soon have been found of getting rid of him; the most obvious being that of turning him into ridicule: a punishment to which most Maoris, of gentle birth, preferred death itself. While the State recognized and patronized duelling, it insisted that it should take place in public. A private rencontre would have been looked upon as a positive fraud upon the public, which would thereby have been deprived of a morning's edifying instruction and exciting entertainment; besides, when a man was killed in a sudden quarrel—and such an accident sometimes happened—the affair was generally stigmatized as a "*kohoru*," an act of treachery or murder. Duels, which were the occasion of military display, were believed to assist in keeping alive the martial spirit, and were rarely attended with fatal results. This was most sedulously guarded against by the combatants, for the death of a man, killed upon the spot by a clumsy duellist, might, and sometimes did, precipitate an immediate and general battle.

Barbarous as this system of law and justice must be considered, it was perfectly satisfactory to those whose actions it controlled. Maori ladies received no invitation from a local Lord Penzance, and Maori gentlemen had not the honour of having interviews (by deputy) with a Lord Chancellor. Neither had the rising generation and the public at large the questionable advantage of reading in the public prints prurient details of salacious trials. Moreover, as the consequences of indiscretion were so heavily visited, not

Digitized by Google

only upon the trespasser but upon his relatives and friends, men and women walked with the utmost circumspection, and the sun never shone upon a more cheerful, happy, and, as far as their knowledge led them, a more moral people than the Maoris. The zest and excitement afforded by a tournament was not impaired by their too frequent occurrence. It was remarked that when two or three had taken place in quick succession in the same neighbourhood, an interval of months would pass away without one; everybody being, as it were, put upon his best behaviour. This had been the case at Rotorua, and the arrival of the distinguished personage, whose convenience had been so carefully studied, made the next morning a scene of busy preparation. Warriors were carefully attending to their personal appearance, oiling their hair, and decorating it, as their taste or ability dictated, with the whitest feathers of the albatross, or the rarer plumes of the *huia;* or with bivalve shell in the one hand, were, with the other, diligently searching for the smallest growth of that noble manly ornament, the beard, which a strange infatuation made it the fashion to extirpate. Matrons and servants were early at work weaving baskets of fresh flax leaves, in which to carry food to the hundreds who would in a few hours criticize their ability in serving a feast; when quantity, quality, and their skill in arranging the aforesaid baskets, would be silently appreciated or condemned. Besides this duty, they had to prepare an unusually good breakfast for their husbands and brothers, that

Digitized by Google

they might be in good heart to act their parts in the performances of the day. Even the boys were in a state of hilarious excitement, dancing the war dance, and playing at pretended duels. The fathers of the Ngatiroa settlement were early assembled in council, revolving the important matter of what houses should be "*muru*," an untranslatable word usually rendered "robbed," but confiscated is nearer the mark, for it is absurd to say that what has been freely given has been robbed. In all languages there are words which admit of no literal translation. The *causa belli* was as old as the siege of Troy, and a great deal older—the caprice of a woman. A matron, well stricken in years, of the rival tribe of the Patupo, had, during the absence of many of the principal chiefs of both tribes at Ngutukaka, engaged in a flirtation with a handsome young chief of the Ngatiroa. Both parties were of great rank. It therefore concerned the honour of the Ngatiroa to behave with becoming liberality upon the occasion.

The warriors having freely partaken of the morning meal, Toe Toe, the principal Ngatiroa chief of the settlement, proceeded to marshal his men, and having given them a preliminary breathing inside the Pa, marched out and took up his position in what may be considered review order. Thereupon the rival *tawa* filed out of their Pa, which had outwardly appeared to be in an unusually quiescent state the whole morning. The Patupo *tawa* having formed outside their Pa, a fleet runner darted out from the ranks of the Nga-

Digitized by Google

tiroa, danced in front of the Patupo, hurled his spear towards them, and fled back to his own force, pursued by three or four of the fleetest of the Patupo. He was too fleet, however, or the distance was too short for him to be overtaken. This throwing the spear and chase of the spearman were the customary welcome upon the the approach of a friendly *tawa* under arms.

Takiwaru, the leader of the Patupo, now gave the order to charge, and bore down upon the Ngatiroa as if he intended battle; but when his men had reached within a few paces of their antagonists, he roared out a fresh word of command, and his *tawa* sank down on one knee as if they were but one man, so suddenly and simultaneously all halted and knelt down. Toe Toe thereupon commenced a dance of welcome, his followers competing with one another in activity and in the frightful contortions of their faces. Upon the conclusion of the performance his force knelt down likewise. Takiwaru then made a sign, and with a bound his men began dancing, and striving to excel in agility the performances of their rivals. At last the dancing terminated, and the business of the day commenced. We have spoken only of the two war parties, but every eminence, every vantage point, which commanded a good view of the small space between the hostile ranks, was crowded with thousands of interested lookers on.

Forth bounded from the ranks of the Patupo a bullet-headed, curly-haired, dark, athletic man, somewhat past the prime of life, whose unusual stoutness made his astonishing agility the more remarkable.

Digitized by Google

Leaping to and fro between the ranks and facing the Ngatiroa, he shouted, "Come forth, Ngaweke! come forth you vile seducer! I shall kill you this day! this day!" The immense muscles of his hairy tattooed legs fairly quivered with exertion and excitement, though his limbs looked as hard as iron. In answer to his challenge a tall, fair, handsome young man stepped out of the ranks of the Ngatiroa, and knelt down upon his right knee, placing his spear upon the ground within easy grasp of his hand. He carried himself bravely, but in his wavering eyes a physiognomist would have detected the ring of base metal. At the sight of him the anger of his antagonist increased; he bellowed and shouted in a frantic manner, and so intimidated his antagonist that when he rushed at him with levelled spear, the miserable aggressor fell over on his side and wept. A deep sound between a sigh and a groan was heard from the ranks of the Ngatiroa, but they had no pretext for interference. A greater triumph could not have been awarded to the admirable acting of the stout gentleman, who was, of course, the injured husband, than the downfall of his antagonist without receiving the first blow, as in honour he was bound to have done. The conqueror, however, was not satisfied, and made the common mistake of trampling upon a fallen foe, which he did literally; for with a canine gesture of supreme contempt, which raised a shout of applause from the Patupo, he placed his foot upon his fallen foe, and repeated his request, "Rise up! rise up! that I may

Digitized by Google

kill you." "Oh, sir! cease teasing that boy, and listen to me!" cried a cheerful voice from the Ngatiroa. It proceeded from a fine-looking man, not more than thirty years of age, who, hurriedly exchanging his mat for the apron of one of his comrades, stepped lightly through the ranks and bounded into the arena. Running between the armies he leapt lightly but vigorously into the air like a flying Mercury. As his lithe form, a mixture of grace and daring, again touched the earth, his friends murmured, "*Ta Tiari pai hoke!* Just like Tiari!" "Listen to me! Listen to me!" said he. "I have sinned; I am very wicked." Springing afresh into the air, and alighting this time with his face to the Patupo, he addressed them: "I have done wrong, I have done very wrong." Walking to and fro between the hostile ranks, he continued: "Last autumn I was with a party in the hills, felling spars to repair the eel Pa. I had been long from home, and I felt the nights weary, and the pangs of absence. I had been thinking much about my wife and children. I felt a singing in my ears, and I could not work; so I knew that something was wrong at home. I slipped away, thinking that I could reach home before dark; but I found that I should be overtaken by the night, so I lighted a fire at the Karikari, and went on my way with a firebrand in my hand to scare away the *macoro* (the wood demon). Alas! I was careless. As I passed the plain of Paparoa, a spark from my brand fell upon and lighted the dry fern. I heard the crackling of the fire, and my heart

Digitized by Google

sank within me. I was terrified at the mischief I had done, and I turned and went back again. No one had missed me. The warning to go home was correct, for the next day my little girl broke her leg when swinging, and she is still a cripple. I know that I ought at once to have confessed this dreadful crime, for which I deserve death; but I could not make up my mind to leave my children. I said to myself; when the raft of timber is brought to Rotorua, then I shall confess; and then indeed I should have told, but just now, when Ngaweke was disgracing us, I thought—now is the time to tell all, and to take the place of that foolish boy, who, I know, was more sinned against than sinning. This is all I have to say. Now, Hoto, come and kill me." And telling the miserable Ngaweke to go away, Tiari took the young man's place.

Burning a favourite fern plain, whether by accident or intention, was indeed a heinous offence, for it would be many years before the fern-root recovered its edible qualities, and in many cases it never fully regained them. Tiari might therefore well say that he deserved death; and had this been inflicted immediately after the offence by one of the Patupo owners of the plain, it is possible that his death might have been considered so well merited as not to require "*utu*" payment—a payment always taken in kind—a life for a life. Fortune had made some amends to Tiari by giving him so favourable an opportunity of declaring his guilt. His own tribe were thankful to him for having so good an excuse for interfering with and stopping the rampant

Digitized by Google

Hoto; while the Patupo, who had abandoned the hope of discovering the delinquent who had burned their fern, were well pleased to discover him in the ranks of their rivals, against whom they had thereby acquired an additional ground for "*muru.*"

Tiari's looks did not correspond with his lamb-like invitation. Kneeling upon the ground, his spear by his side, his eye followed every motion of his antagonist, who at once perceived that he had a difficult task to perform. A mild phlebotomy was in truth all that he had contemplated inflicting upon Ngaweke, but the delinquent before him deserved condign, or, at the least, severe punishment; his tribe would feel satisfied with no less. Clearly, Tiari must be severely bled, though not bled to death; or, better still, if he could hit him in the shoulder-joint and "break him" it would be highly satisfactory.

"Wasteful food destroyer! The point of my spear in your throat shall be the last thing you shall ever taste;" cried Hoto, as he rushed at his kneeling antagonist; apparently intending to drive his spear into the throat of the fire-raiser, who did not flinch a hair's-breadth even when the weapon was under his chin. Drawing back, Hoto, still carrying his spear aimed at his antagonist's throat, again rushed at the fern-burner, calling upon him to look his last upon the sunshine; but when he was upon his man he rapidly dropped the point of his spear, and drove at Tiari's right shoulder-joint. Quick as he was, he was not quite quick enough for his antagonist, who, more swiftly than the eye could

Digitized by Google

follow, met the movement and caught the point of Hoto's spear in a particular muscle, whence immediately issued a minute stream of blood. A murmur of applause from the Ngatiroa followed this cleverly executed success on the part of their man, who had thereby almost placed himself upon a par with his antagonist; for Hoto, having exercised his right of drawing the first blood without resistance, possessed only the further remaining advantage of renewing the combat while his antagonist was still upon his knee. With the duellist's cry, "Rise up, rise up; I shall kill you this day!" Hoto again rushed at Tiari, who, springing up, met him spear in hand, when a highly scientific encounter commenced, to the intense gratification of the spectators. The attacks of Hoto increased in fury when he found that he had met his equal, if not his master, in the noble exercise of fencing. He was no longer careful to thrust at those parts of the body which were considered safe. The great reputation he had acquired upon many a field was at stake; he would sooner lose his life than the reputation of being the best spear of the Lake, and he made furious lunges, thrusting as though he were upon the field of battle, and not that of a friendly "*tawa muru*," in which the death of an antagonist was no more desired or expected than in a duel between two German students at Heidelberg. At length the vigour of the attacks decreased, and Tiari, who had hitherto contented himself with remaining upon the defensive, changing his tactics, pierced his antagonist through the hand with his first thrust, and finished the combat.

Digitized by Google

Upon this Toe Toe shouted to his visitors, "*Murua! murua!*" an invitation of which they were not slow to avail themselves. The street they were invited to confiscate on account of the misbehaviour of Ngaweke, was supplemented by that in which lived Tiari and his relatives, from which there was neither time or opportunity to remove even the most cherished ornaments or weapons; and the Patupo for upwards of an hour revelled in their work of destruction. The women then performed their part in the day's proceedings. The ovens were opened, and trains of women and girls came forth from the Pa, each carrying piled-up baskets of steaming hot food, with which, after the whole of the visitors were supplied, the wants of their own people were satisfied. Both parties were in high good humour; the Patupo at having discovered the culprit who had burned their favourite fern plain, and at having received satisfactory "*utu;*" while the Ngatiroa were in fits of delight at discovering among themselves a spearman accomplished enough to gain the victory over his celebrated antagonist. To the uninitiated a combat such as we have described would appear like a mere bout at single-stick; a great deal of clatter, but not much delicate science. It was not so, however, when acted before an appreciative audience, most of whom, when relating the scene, would describe every thrust, stroke, or parry as they had taken place.

The chiefs of the Ngatiroa felt that they were called upon to redeem the honour of their tribe by making a handsome present, or shall we say by fining themselves

Digitized by Google

severely, by way of compensation for the injury caused by the carelessness of one of their comrades. A splendid war canoe, representing more days' labour than an ironclad, was immediately hastily put together and presented to the Patupo. The latter were not to be outdone in generosity; they therefore persuaded Hoto to divorce his unfaithful wife, a matter in which they experienced very little difficulty, and, not without a spice of humour, presented her to the Ngatiroa. When the feasting was finished, and both tribes at their leisure had returned home, only one man and one woman looked back upon the past with deep but unavailing regret. The woman no longer possessed a distinguished warrior for her husband, and the young man had disgraced himself, and was saddled for life with an old harridan.

note 5. page 194.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

In the stone age of Maoria, the forest was the scene of the heaviest labour of the hardy sons of the land. The first duty of existence, the production of food, and the second, which they considered of equal importance, the defence of freedom and of life, required that man should fell the giant pines and umbrageous cypress-trees, shape them into immense war and fishing canoes, or, as piles for their eel-weirs, drive them into the lakes and rivers. The universal law which makes the whole male creation combatants, and man, as he is the highest, the most pugnacious creature on the globe, also requires him to erect defensive works; the forest was therefore laid under contribution for the palisades of their great hill forts, the remains of which are marvellous monuments of the early industry of a fast disappearing race. When "the black skins" have finally disappeared, and with them the hatred of race engendered by their at least equal bravery as soldiers, and more than equal

Digitized by Google

skill as military engineers to "the red skins," as they term the Europeans before whom they are disappearing; then, but not till then, will posterity rightly estimate the imperishable monuments presented by the terraced hills of Maoria, and, comparing them to the wonders of Italy or Syria, rank them as works which history will never reproduce.

Every few years a tribe put forth all its strength to obtain a supply of timber. Trees of the required description were innumerable, but it was no easy matter to find a sufficient number growing near one another, and not too far from a river side; this last being, as may easily be perceived, a most important condition. The trees growing beside every small stream, on which a canoe could float in the rainy or winter season, were thoroughly well known, and groves near the water side, which contained suitable timber, were marked for felling in after years.

When the spot had been decided upon, the first step was to erect a Pa for the defence of the working party; the greatest chiefs considering it as much a part of their duty to guide the tribe, and to encourage it by their example in all works of toil, as it was their privilege to lead and command it in time of war. The Pa being constructed, some of the neighbouring ground was cleared and fallowed for *kumira* and *taro* cultivation. In their far-off home of Hawaiki the *taro* grew spontaneously; in the Isles of Oceania the cocoa-nut-tree makes man a lethargic idler; and on the vast continent of America a bountiful nature provided

Digitized by Google

countless herds of deer and buffalo for the food of the Red Indian, thereby making him a mere hunter. In Maoria, nature required to be wooed before she would yield her gifts, and the Maoris were the only race who were agriculturists on a large scale, while yet ignorant of the use of metal. In their land the *taro* and the *kumira* were exotics, and it was only to careful cultivation that they yielded an abundant harvest. If any proof were requisite of the immense extent of the *kumira* cultivations, and consequent great population of the country, it is afforded by the countless pits and quarries with which the central plain of the Waitebuna basin is studded, and from which gravel and sand were taken to mix with the top-soil for the purposes of *kumira* cultivation. Even fern-root, the great spontaneous growth of the open lands, required a large amount of labour before it was fit for food. Dug up with a pointed stick from an average depth of two feet, it required to be carefully dried in the sun, and, before it could be eaten, to be pounded bit by bit with a mallet; so dry and unpalatable however was an exclusive diet of fern-root, that there was a proverb applicable to any peculiarly disagreeable work, that it was "eating fern-root without a relish." This hankering after "a relish" is universal, and a Maori naturally considered it hard times when his fern-root or *kumiras* were not seasoned with fish, fresh or dried. It is true that in autumn and winter birds were in season, but they were never sufficiently numerous to be more than a luxury.

Digitized by Google

Hard and wearisome was the toil necessary to construct a war canoe, as hard perhaps as the labour required to build one of those impregnable forts in which the present iron age goes forth to battle upon the seas. Could valour be estimated as accurately as weight of metal or thickness of iron plating, it may be questioned whether the ironclads, hurling sulphurous missiles at one another from a distance, have on board men more filled with the rapture of strife and the contempt of death than those in the canoes, which dashed with furious valour upon one another to decide the battle in hand-to-hand combat "by the light of their enemies' eyes."

Upon one of the tributaries of the Rotorua Lake, the Ngatiroa had for three years been busy at work in the forest. The first year they had built a Pa for their protection, and cleared the brushwood from the ground upon the edge of the forest; the second year, when the crops planted had come to maturity, and they were saved from the great labour of carrying provisions into the woods, the tributary being only navigable after heavy rain, the work of felling trees had been undertaken. The third year had been passed in felling and dubbing down spars for repairing the forts and eel-weirs. Their labours were nearly ended, but a large raft which they had filled with timber, *totara*, *konaka*, and *tanekawa*, was aground just where the river merged into an extensive swamp which required heavy rain to move its dull tide; there it had lain for some months, the rainfall having been less than usual that year. The first month

Digitized by Google

(June) of the new year commenced with the first new moon after the appearance of the winter star, *Puanga*, in the morning. The raft had been ready in the second month (July), when heavy rain is usually expected; but the days went by, and the fifth month had arrived without the usual winter floods; should it not move in the course of a month, there would be little hope of stirring it till it was released by the next autumn rains. In few countries do the seasons vary so much as they do in Maoria; storms, gales, and rain follow almost without intermission in some winters; but in others, storms of wind seem to prevent the usual rain from falling. This had been the case in the season which had just passed away, and the delay was the cause of much anxiety, as the timber was urgently required at Rotorua and Ngutukaka. Rain had repeatedly fallen during the boisterous winter, but there was no heart in it; no heavy fall released the timber raft, and a deputation was upon the point of starting down the river to Ngutukaka to request the presence of the Tohunga in the emergency, when the chiefs of Rotorua were called to the fortress to witness the departure of their Ariki. At the earnest request of the magnates of Rotorua, Ngawhare had consented to go where his own inclinations led him, and upon being further importuned, to invoke the oracle. As we have already been present at a Maori *séance*, we need not closely follow the proceedings. When asked when the raft would float, the invoking spirit answered, "Twice eight! twice eight! twice eight!" a reply the To-

Digitized by Google

hunga professed himself unable to interpret. Days passed, and still the long wished-for rain held off. Ngawhare, with reluctance, again consented to consult the oracle, and this time he did so with more effect. The chiefs assembled in the house of the diviner had passed the night in a state of anxious expectation, without the spirit putting in an appearance; and, in reply to the anxious inquiries addressed to him, the Tohunga expressed the opinion that his familiar was angry at being twice troubled on the same subject. They still watched, however; and at last, when the morning star had risen, a sound, like a voice calling in the distance, was heard, and immediately afterwards the house resounded with a noise, as though some person had rushed against it and broken through its wall of reeds. As the shock died away, a voice from the roof saluted them, "Greetings to those present, to you Toe Toe, to you Kowhai, to you Ngawhare, and to all of you. Why am I again troubled?" Ngawhare returned the salutation, and said aloud, "When will float our raft of timber in the Pikopiko?" The voice answered sharply, "At the sound of the trumpet" (the war horn). This enigmatical reply was not considered satisfactory; but Ngawhare, having at the general desire addressed another question and received no reply, was deaf to all entreaty to question the spirit further; saying that it was angry, and that to give it further trouble would be to bring misfortune and bad luck upon them. He gave it as his own opinion that rain would fall before long, and that the raft would

Digitized by Google

float; but they must be ready, for they would have no second chance, and that if they did not then succeed in driving it down to the lake, they would have no further opportunity till the autumn rains fell. Thus urged, a strong party remained at Pikopiko ready for action. At last the long-desired rain fell; it commenced in the evening with the wind from the N.E., and rained heavily and steadily all night. It cleared off towards morning, and with the dawn the Tohunga rose, and, taking a small fast canoe, started by himself for Pikopiko. Long before he reached the swamp in which the raft was stranded, he heard the shouting of those engaged in trying to float it, and knew that the trumpet had not yet sounded. The hot sun was high in the heavens when he reached the raft; springing from his canoe, he seized a handspike from one of the workmen, and chanted the first line of an incantation. The workmen took up the refrain, and as they struck their poles into the ground and pushed together as one man, a peal of thunder, such as one hears once in a lifetime, accompanied by a blaze of fire, reverberated in the hills around. As it died away, the raft began to tremble, and glided gently down the stream. Dropping their handspikes, the men looked at one another, and muttered in awe-struck whispers, "The sound of the trumpet."

Triumphant stood the Tohunga in the centre of the raft, directing her course; representing in the eyes of his deluded followers superhuman power, not what he in reality was, an incarnation of evil hypocrisy. Not a

Digitized by Google

man among those present who possessed a marriageable daughter or sister but would have felt honoured by a connection with the great Tohunga. We may therefore suppose that he was not unsuccessful in his wooing of the widow, the real object of his visit to Rotorua.

A few days before the Tohunga floated the raft and the Ngatiroa left Pikopiko, one of those waifs who sometimes came to the surface of Maori life, made her appearance, attracted by the smoke of the Pa, amongst them. When a woman dreaded being forced into an uncongenial marriage, or more frequently when she had quarrelled with her husband, she would sometimes fly with the intention "to lose herself in the forest." If quickly missed and followed by a person she respected, the chief of her family (*hapu*), or, maybe, her husband, so strong was the force of habit, she would return when she heard his voice calling to her to come back. Otherwise, the chances were fewer of her being again seen than the unfortunate, who has jumped from Waterloo bridge, has of being dragged alive out of old Father Thames. The tribe to which this waif belonged would have been known by her accent had she not possessed sufficient intellect, which she did, to declare it. Displaying the usual crossness and snappishness, and making the grimaces of insanity, she told her incoherent tale. She belonged to the Maniawhere tribe, which dwelt near the source of the river, and she had lost herself in the forest because she had had a dispute with her husband, she knew not how many moons ago.

Digitized by Google

She had ascended Pakekawa, the great mountain at the back of her settlement, upon the top of which she had seen the Patupaihere, great hairy giants, building a Pa. While she was watching them at their work, one of them saw her and made her prisoner; he did not treat her unkindly; on the contrary, the warmth of his attentions led her to attempt her escape, which at last she had succeeded in effecting. Such was her tale, related in fragments, between which she perpetually crooned the following song, which she declared she had learnt from the too affectionate Patupaihere.

"I was born, I was born,
In the dark cloudy sky;
I live, I live,
On the mountains high.
On the earth, on the earth,
I ne'er die, I ne'er die."

The raftmen laughed at her tale, but gave the poor creature shelter, and the refrain of her song, issuing from a hundred stentorian throats, soon woke the echoes of the river as the great raft swang slowly down the stream with the swelling waters.

The Tohunga knew from experience that if matrimony increased his happiness, it also, by enlarging the number of his relatives, increased his troubles. Like all well-to-do gentlemen, he had relatives with whom he could easily have dispensed—relatives if not of himself, at least of his numerous wives; and for the purpose of giving trouble, a man's wife's relations are as effective as his own. While the love-fit lasted, no one could be

Digitized by Google

more uxorious; and his new wife did not allow the honeymoon to pass away without asking him to perform his promise and assist her brother, who was deeply in love. A party of the Ngatiroa had lately returned from a visit to the powerful tribe of the Mania; among them was Taipari, a handsome young fellow, a general favourite, and the brother of the lady who had been the last to captivate the fickle affections of Ngawhare. Taipari had declared his passion in the usual Maori fashion when his party left the settlement of the Maniawhere. He had, after rowing a short time, laid down in the bottom of the canoe, saying he was sick. After a time, in reply to reiterated inquiries, he answered, "I have fallen, I have fallen." Pressed to name the lady, he had at length named Te Pia, a young lady of the Mania tribe, of great rank, but of remarkably plain personal appearance. This did not lessen the difficulty of the case, for the companions of Taipari knew that one man could be as madly in love with the plainest and smallest woman, as another with "a woman tall and fine," as they expressed their ideas of female beauty; and there was no reason to hope that a demand for the hand of the lady would prove successful. Of old times in Maoria, when a man formed a hopeless attachment, it often terminated fatally. If no warlike expedition was on foot to distract his attention, and give him the opportunity of curing himself by the excitement of battle, or by seeking death at the hands of his enemies, he would either pine away, or by his own rash act end his pain. Taipari was pining away when

Digitized by Google

his sister, who loved him dearly, made it the condition of her consent that her husband should obtain for her brother the hand of the lady for whom he was dying.

Under this domestic pressure Ngawhare proclaimed a "*tawa tango,*" a *tawa* for carrying off a woman. An indispensable preliminary to every description of *tawa,* whether a *tawa muru,* a *tawa* to confiscate, a *tawa tango,* a *tawa* for carrying off a woman, or a *tawa toto,* a *tawa* to kill and destroy, was to send and give notice, otherwise it would have been stigmatised as a "*kohoru,*" a murder or act of treachery.

The notice once given, the march of the raiding party might follow immediately, or be delayed for an indefinite time, which was sometimes done with the view of throwing the enemy off his guard.

Ngawhare selected as his ambassadress a lady of the highest rank, accustomed to act as envoy upon such occasions. Te Rangi Oha, the daughter of Te Au O Te Rangi, and sister of the ruling Ariki, was not less distinguished for her high birth than for her generosity and hospitality; indeed, she practised these virtues to an extent which, even in Maori eyes, bordered upon excess. Everything that she possessed she immediately gave away, and so fully occupied was she upon public affairs, that she had little or no time to bestow upon her own. In one respect she almost usurped a function of the ruder sex, for she was capable, nay fond of speaking in public, an unusual accomplishment in a Maori female. But, while taking a large share in public affairs, she re-

Digitized by Google

tained a simplicity which, no less than her hospitality and generosity, endeared her to her countrymen. Enshrined in these virtues the old lady performed journeys and visited distant tribes in safety, when a less known and honoured envoy would never have been allowed to return home. These public virtues, it may readily be supposed, were not accompanied by the lesser domestic graces. Te Oha was not fortunate in her matrimonial ventures; for the fourth time she was a widow. Two of her husbands had been killed in battle, one drowned, and one had disappeared no one knew where. Scandal did whisper that they had all sought death to escape the infliction of listening to her, but no great public character ever was, or will be, without detractors. In the multiplicity of her public engagements she had found time to give birth to one daughter, the Tui whose acquaintance we have already made, and as the girl approached womanhood she acquired sufficient influence over the old lady to keep her more at home. It was thus that Tui had persuaded her mother to teach her the skilled weaving the old lady had learned during a visit to the far distant south.

Te Oha was to start upon her mission in a *kopapa*, a small canoe, which barely held the old lady and the two female attendants who were to accompany her. Her daughter was standing upon the bank to witness the departure of the ambassadress, who appeared to be more interested in taking leave of some friends who were about starting in a canoe up the lake, than in thinking about either her child or her mission. The

Digitized by Google

day was showery, and, while she was talking to an old chief who was seated in the stern of the other canoe, the rain again began to fall. The old gentleman, like herself, was indifferently protected from the weather, and her restless bright eye glanced over all the lookers-on upon the bank and settled upon her daughter, who was enveloped in a comfortable large *pureki*, no one there being more appropriately dressed for the season. The old lady briskly slipping out of her canoe, stripped off her daughter's cloak and threw it to her old acquaintance, amidst the laughter and applause of the bystanders.

Like many another plenipotentiary, Te Oha was ignorant of the real intentions of her principal, or she would have scorned being used as an instrument of deception. Two large canoes full of armed men impatiently waited her departure to follow her; and it was arranged that the *tawa* should remain for that very indefinite period "a day or two" at a friendly settlement, while the old lady preceded it and gave the indispensable notice of its approach. Te Oha saw the *tawa* hospitably received at the friendly village of Kawau-nui, and pushed straight on to Orakau, the settlement of the Mania, where she was received with great respect and distinction; nor was there the slightest change made in the manner of her hosts when she announced that a *tawa* from Rotorua would be there the following day, or the day after (the old lady had passed one night on the river), for the purpose of carrying off Te Pia, for the love of whom Tai-

Digitized by Google

pari was dying. "Of whom did the *tawa* consist?" she was asked in reply. "Of from eighty to ninety pairs in two canoes under the command of Ngawhare." The Mania made no answer; they felt rather offended at so small a *tawa* coming to attempt the abduction of one of their maidens. The only thing that troubled them was that Ngawhare was coming in command; for a man of his reputation was very unlikely to undertake the accomplishment of an ill-considered project. The *tawa* had left Rotorua but a few hours when Toe Toe, either seized with remorse for allowing so small a *tawa* to leave upon such a difficult expedition, or acting upon a secret understanding with Ngawhare, shouted his war cry, "A *tawa!* A *tawa!* come with me! come with me!" and very soon followed the two canoes, which had already started, with seven more, full of men. One of these he dropped a little above the entrance to the Rotorua River, with orders, in case any of the other tribes should send off an express to give notice to the Mania, to intercept it. The others pulled hard all that night, and day was breaking when they landed below Orakau, and took up a position in a gully close below the fort. As the sun rose the two canoes under Ngawhare approached the fort, their bows in line; the bowmen, standing in the stems, with song and uplifted paddle giving the time to which the other paddles all flashed in unison. But a single impulse seemed to propel the two canoes, and their harmonious rhythm gave them the appearance of two huge centipedes moving upon the face of the waters. The

Digitized by Google

Maniawhere, having reconnoitred and seen that there were but two canoes approaching, opened the gates of their Pa, and, like civic authorities caught napping upon the approach of royalty, made frantic efforts to get their pageantry into order. The women greeted the strangers with shouts of welcome, and the chiefs having marshalled their men, performed the customary dance of welcome. The Ngatiroa, who had landed below the Pa, formed in a long oblong phalanx, the rear of which rested upon the gully in which their friends lay concealed, and, upon the conclusion of the dance of the Mania, commenced their share in the performance. The oblong wedge, the Maori order of battle, advanced, singing in a low tone, and gesticulating in what they would have called a mild manner. On they advanced, the movement raising no suspicion in the breasts of their adversaries, it being part of the customary ritual of the war dance, until the thin end of the phalanx overlapped the Mania, and stood between them and the gates of the Pa. Suddenly a change was visible in the antics of the Ngatiroa; their gesticulations became violent, their eyes protruded, their heads were thrown back, and their throats uttered a mighty shout. As the cry passed their lips, a stream of warriors rushed up the banks of the gully, and joined the cluster of their comrades, now swollen to a compact mass of six hundred men. When the Mania realised the ruse practised upon them, they never for a moment thought of giving up the fair cause of the incursion without a struggle. Into the

Digitized by Google

Pa poured both parties, the Mania to rally round the bride, if we may call her so; the Ngatiroa, except the small party expressly told off to carry away the lady, seeking every man an opponent to wrestle with. Each party was anxious to avoid bloodshed, both being "Tribes of the River." The uproar was therefore greater than had they been engaged in actual warfare, it being more difficult to master a man by strength of muscle than to knock a hole through him. At length superior numbers prevailed. Those who fought around the lady were dragged away; she was roughly seized: and such a tugging and hauling ensued that had she not been to the manner born, she must have been rent in pieces. At last but one young man, a secret admirer of the lady, retained his hold. An active young fellow, he had so twisted his hands and arms into the girl's hair, and fought so vigorously with his legs, that he could not be removed until he was knocked down senseless.

The contest ended and the bride borne in triumph to the canoes, both parties proceeded to pick up their weapons and smooth their feathers, ruffled in the violent exercise in which they had been engaged. Everything had been conducted in the most honourable and satisfactory manner. The Ngatiroa had duely declared their intention, and, if they had surprised the Mania, the latter had learnt a lesson, and had only succumbed to superior numbers. No lives had been lost; only a few bones broken, which would soon mend, and it would be their turn next time. In the meantime

Digitized by Google

their own characters required them to fulfil the duties of hospitality, and the *tawa* was requested to remain until food was cooked and placed before it. What did the well-mauled bride think of all this? When she heard that the *tawa* was approaching to try and carry her off, her heart beat the faster at the compliment paid to her. "Those tall girls who think so much of themselves want the indescribable something which is so attractive, besides Taipari is such a handsome young man." As we have said, the lady was to the manner born, and, somehow or other, habit accustoms us to anything or everything, even to the chance of having one's throat cut in the cool of early morning. In a veracious history it must not be omitted that in less than a month the young lady was so violently jealous of Taipari that she could not for a moment trust him out of her sight.

Ora and Te Maire had avoided one another, as it were, by a mutual understanding. They had not spoken during her stay at Rotorua; she had, however, too high a spirit to leave the lake without coming to an explanation with the dreaded keeper of the eel-weir. A party being about starting down the river, which she intended accompanying, she said, "*Na!* behold! before I leave this I shall go to Maire and see if he is strong enough to dare to refuse my right to take eels." As she approached the eel-weir, from the precincts of which the keeper was never absent, he advanced to meet her, muttering to himself inarticulate words; but when they had drawn

Digitized by Google

near to one another, he sat down saying, "My dear child, we have not met since we lost our Ariki;" an invitation, under the circumstances, to lament together the lost ruler. This was done by rubbing faces, embracing, and in exclamations, broken by sobs, bewailing the departed. Their embrace was of the shortest, for no sooner did the old man place his hand upon the girl's arm than she started back crying, "You have hurt me; you have pinched my arm." She returned in tears to the house she had left, and her arm shortly commenced to swell. No mark was visible, but in a few hours it had become of an immense size. Surrounded by her crying companions, moaning with pain, and saying she was bewitched and was going to die, the poor girl passed the night; and the next day, about the hour she had made her luckless visit to the jealous guardian of the eel-weir, she passed away—killed by her frantic, unfounded fears, or by the machinations of Te Maire.

Has man ever occult power over his fellows? The *Pakeha* scornfully answers, "Never!" Yet nearly the whole of what we are pleased to call the uncivilized world answers that he has, and it is difficult to deny that many men and women exercise influences which are unaccountable.

It is not only in India that "the evil eye" is dreaded, or only in Maoria that people die because they believe that they are bewitched.

The death of Ora caused no more sensation than

Digitized by Google

would have attended it had it been caused by disease. Te Maire, they said, had bewitched and killed another person, making full thirty whose death he had caused. But then, he was a great chief, and no one had ever managed the eel-weir with equal success, or been so strict and fair in distributing the fish. No matter the number of visitors, it was impossible to find him without a good supply of dried eels. The death of the girl was a most unfortunate occurrence, but it could not be helped. Had he been an ordinary person, of course he would have been killed for payment; as it was, the lady had, doubtless, given him provocation, so the less said about the matter the better. Public opinion in Rotorua had, however, not rightly estimated the effect of the death of a favourite daughter upon the feelings of an angry father. When the express sent to tell Tomo reached Ngutukaka, he said little, merely giving orders where he wished his child to be buried. A few days passed, during which he appeared to be outwardly little affected. He then summoned four of his most trusted adherents, and proceeded secretly to Rotorua, timing his arrival so that he reached the Pa in the night. Otane, a strong, powerful man, who acted as his lieutenant upon the occasion, demanded admittance, inventing an excuse for the untimely arrival of the party. Upon their gaining admission, they went straight to the house of Te Maire. Greeting him with words of salutation, Otane approached the sleeping-place of

Digitized by Google

the sorcerer and his wife: suddenly he seized the old man by the throat and uttered a low cry; his companions rushed in, and, without any alarm being raised in the Pa, the two practisers of abominable arts were sent to their account.

Quickly the avengers, taking the corpses with them, proceeded to the nearest cooking-house, and, having lighted the oven, threw the bodies upon the hot stones. This was done by way of further "payment," and to disgrace the remains of the sorcerers. Having effected their object the executioners left the Pa, telling the guard at the gate that they would find something they had left in the cooking-house.

Had the execution of the sorcerers been the act of another tribe, the Ngatiroa would, as a matter of course, have felt bound in honour to resent their death. Being killed, as they were, by some of the highest members of their own tribe, under circumstances of great provocation, the tribe as a body looked upon the matter as an affair concerning themselves only, and one to which exactly applied the expressive word "*tohungia*"—"do not touch it." Moreover, the number of deaths attributed to the keeper and his wife caused a large proportion of the jury, composed of the whole of the inhabitants of the Rotorua River, to find the verdict of, "Served them right."

note 6. page 194.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

HAD man changed or had the seasons altered since the arrival of the immigrants from Hawaiki? Man certainly had changed, and nature seemed to have altered in unison. A few centuries, a mere drop in the ocean of time, had proved sufficient to change the soft sybarite of Hawaiki, or his descendants, into the fierce Maorian soldier, who believed that war and glory were the breath of man's nostrils. He had gradually developed into a proud, brave, self-possessed, athletic, energetic, industrious barbarian; delighting in battle and intolerably conceited of his own military prowess, or of that of his chiefs, whose deeds he believed had never been equalled. It would be injustice to omit his kindness and forbearance to his tribe and to his friends, though these virtues were counterbalanced by his ruthlessness and abominable cruelty to his enemies. Nature, too, had changed since the arrival of Te Arawa and

Digitized by Google

her consorts of the immigrant fleet, or they never could have crossed the stormy seas which separate Hawaiki from Maoria. Nor if even they had sighted the dreamed-of land, could the feet of the famine-pinched crews have touched the shore; the surging breakers must have shattered their frail vessels upon the iron-bound west coast. Physically improved as the race had become, and well acquainted as they were with the winds, the coasts, and the estuaries, to venture over the bars which blocked the mouths of all the rivers upon the west coast, was looked upon as a matter never unaccompanied by danger, and only to be undertaken in the very finest weather, and even then with great precaution. The storms of winter over, "the bird-moon" (November), the month in which the young sea-birds are fledged and become fit for food, seldom passed without the Ngatiroa war canoes venturing across the bar to Ahana, a rocky storm-beaten island some fifteen miles from the mainland. Myriads of sea-birds built their nests in the rock, where it was impossible to walk without treading upon them; and so numerous were fish a short distance from the shore, that when fishing for the magnificent *hapuka* (cod-fish)—some of which weighed more than a hundred-weight—a very heavy sinker was requisite, that the bait might pass swiftly through the shoals of *tamura* (bream), of little account in comparison with their great fat neighbours, who lived below them. Fish and birds were certain to reward the risk of a voyage to Ahana, but the best prizes of these dangerous

Digitized by Google

expeditions were the seals, some of which were always surprised upon the rock and carried back in triumph to Ngutukaka.

The gales of spring had extended into summer, making the weather-wise predict "a year of storms," as they had confidently predicted a year of famine, "a sun year," before the late rain fell; the bird-month was passing, and the weather had not yet permitted the canoes to venture to Ahana.

At length the prudence of Karaka was overcome by the impatience and importunity of his followers, who urged that if they delayed longer the young birds would have all flown; and he was induced to put to sea before the weather was quite settled. The rock was some miles distant when the rising west wind made the crews repent of their rashness, and pull with all their strength to gain the shelter it offered. Ahana, when approached from the east, and still at a distance, looks like a great ship which has turned over and is floating bottom upwards. Seen nearer, the island resembles a bent bow rising gradually from the ends to the rugged ridge which forms the centre. The west or windward side of the island rises in bold cliffs from the sea, which has worn and torn away the limestone until large detached masses of fantastic shape form miniature islands near the parent rock. Some of these detached rocks, the sea, in the course of ages, has worn into obelisks; others, where the limestone is softer and intersected with parallel seams, which time and the ocean have enlarged and grooved, look as though they had

Digitized by Google

been built in layers by the hand of man: but all afforded homes of perfect security to innumerable tenants, which, when the canoes landed on the main rock, joined the thousands of their less fortunate neighbours, who, screaming in the air, were complaining that the great destroyer had come to rob them of their young.

The canoes, having reached the shelter of the island, in silence and with noiseless paddles entered the only landing-place—a rent in the rock, where landing, if not easy, was at least practicable. This rent or cove was also the only place upon the rock whence the seals could take the water, and from thence their pursuers intended to make them attempt to effect their escape.

Entering the cove, the seal hunters formed a semi-circle through which the seals must pass, if they could be forced, by a few of the first who landed, to make for the sea. A small herd of fur seals were basking in the shelter afforded by the centre of the island, but alarmed by the noise with which the sea-birds screamed their dislike to the unwonted intrusion into their domain, they rushed to make their escape over the cliffs, pursued by the men who had proceeded in advance to drive them down to the landing-place. The hunt was unsuccessful, nearly the whole of the seals escaping over the cliffs; and one old male, who was overtaken by the two fleetest of the pursuers, turned upon them, broke their clubs, and threw them heavily upon the rocks. Two or three cubs formed the sole bag of that day's hunt. During the week the canoes were detained upon the rock by the gale of wind, their experience, however, enabled the

Digitized by Google

crews to improve their tactics, and two or three successful expeditions enabled them to fully retrieve the misadventure of the first day's seal hunting.

"A gale of wind" always extinguishes a good many lights, and darkens many homes. In this case many many lives paid, though indirectly, the cost of the gale which detained the little fleet at Ahana, where we must for the present leave it, the crews seal hunting and fowling, while we relate what was taking place at Ngutukaka during its absence.

Ngutukaka had scarcely lost sight of the canoes when a messenger was seen rapidly approaching along the north sands. He proved to be a herald to announce the approach of a great embassy from the Northern Tribe, to whom Karaka had presented the unfortunate *hapu* of Pihoe. This announcement created the greatest excitement, for among the ambassadors were Waata and Rehutai, and Pakapa-kutotai, the great Northern Tohunga, who, in his own country, was as famous as Ngawhare was in the centre of the island. With the exception of its Ariki the north had sent forth its greatest princes upon this embassy, the purport of which was to request admission into the confederacy the central tribes had formed for the purpose of attacking the tribes upon the south-east coast.

The rank of ambassadors, or upon less important occasions, of messengers, was always a matter of importance; it being understood that the higher the rank of the persons sent, the greater the compliment paid, and the more difficult the refusal of the proposal or

Digitized by Google

request. Three generations had grown up since the last war between the northern and the central tribes, for the oldest men of the Ngatiroa, whose years numbered more than a century, had heard the tale from their fathers. The war, after being conducted with fury by both parties, had dropped from exhaustion; but the loss of the greatest man killed in it, Anatipa, had fallen upon the Ngatiroa, and still rankled in the breasts of his descendants. The former embassy of the Rarawa, composed of persons of little consequence, having not only returned in safety but brought back a valuable present of slaves, had thrown the tribe off their guard; and, misled by their anxiety to be permitted to share in the attack upon the east coast, they were induced to think that their ancient enemies had consented to make peace. The result of this belief was the present great embassy, which brought valuable presents of arms and garments in return for Karaka's present of slaves. Their greatest chiefs were about to arrive in person to formally make peace, and request that they might join the central confederacy. Intense excitement prevailed in Ngutukaka upon the announcement of the approach of the embassy, and the *Runanga* met in consultation.

"They are walking alive into the oven," said Ruia; "remember Anatipa!"

"What!" replied Te Wira, "would you slay these men who are coming hither induced to do so by our own act? I shall not give my consent, it would be an act of treachery, a *kohoru;* my spirit tells me that it

Digitized by Google

would be wrong and displeasing to the Being our ancestors worshipped in the Morai at Hawaiki."

"How mean you?" rejoined the Tohunga; "do you suppose that the Invisible condescends to guide or to view in detail the actions of such as you?"

"Perhaps so," answered the Ariki; "how else did the ten canoes from Hawaiki cross the sea now tumbling before us?"

"Who can say? but I may as well ask why the landslip fell and crushed the town of Oniatangi?" returned Ngawhare.

"Well, we know nothing for a certainty, but I feel that I am right, which you cannot say. I love war, but I also love a straight road to the war; and these men shall be received as our honoured guests."

The Tohunga was not, for a Maori, a bloodthirsty man; but his vanity was interested in the destruction of the only rival to his celebrity. Looking seaward, he saw that the rising gale would prevent the return of Karaka from Ahana for some days, and he felt master of the situation. Karaka was the only man he dared not have thwarted; he had therefore successfully opposed his being named the Ariki of the tribe. Had Karaka been present, he would never have dared to defiantly answer the meditative Te Wira.

"You talk like a woman; one cause of war is as good as another. These madmen have insulted us by coming hither, they shall not escape owing to the softness of a dreamer. I shall appeal to the warriors;" and he withdrew, taking with him his powerful disciple Tomo.

Digitized by Google

While they went to scheme the destruction of the ambassadors, Te Wira, grieving, but feeling powerless to arrest the actions of the others, however fatal they might prove, proceeded to Kauroa, where there had been a general move from the Hill-fort. Placing himself at the head of his warriors, he received the ambassadors with the usual dance of welcome, succeeded by salutations, embraces, and rubbing faces, thereby having, as far as lay in his power, secured their safety. Having conducted them to Ngutukaka, and placed them in the guest-house, he bade them farewell, intimating that upon the following day he would receive their proposals. Satisfied in his own mind that he was upon the straight path in striving to save the lives of the strangers, he was shocked to learn that his efforts in their favour had been frustrated by his brother, acting under the direction of the Tohunga. With Tomo's demand for the death of the Rarawa, the warriors, like the people, seldom merciful when possessed of power, had joyfully acquiesced. Thus was irrevocably sealed the fate of the ambassadors.

Forthwith messengers were despatched to the most distant settlements of the tribe, announcing the arrival and impending slaughter of the ambassadors, to be of course followed by war with the Rarawa, and inviting the presence of the principal chiefs at what was looked upon as the formal declaration of hostilities. The morning after their arrival, the twelve northern magnates were received in public by the Ariki of the Ngatiroa. Seated in the midst of his chiefs he received them very graciously. Their attendants then pro-

Digitized by Google

duced the valuable presents, and threw them down before Te Wira to show that, whatever might be the value of the gifts, they were given with a free heart. All of the tribe who were near at hand were assembled. Round the chiefs were seated the warriors, and beyond them the women and children. Silence reigned for a time, when the orator of the embassy rose and adressed the assembly. "A thousand greetings to you all, brought upon the wings of the warm north wind. Too long have our tribes been separated by cold blasts from the angry south. Let no one enquire the cause of the long separation of our fathers; let us not uncover what time has concealed; we are now brothers, and when you go we would go at your back. The united might of the north and the central river shall, joined together, go forth to battle, and the whole Island shall tremble at our march? That is all I have to say." Then rose Te Wira. "Welcome! welcome! welcome my friends! Our messengers are gone to call together the tribe. When they return and the canoes come back from Ahana, you shall see the strength of the great River, and receive our reply to your proposal." The chiefs of the Ngatiroa then freely mingled with the Rarawa ambassadors; the sooth-sayers singling one another out and tenderly embracing. "Brother," said Ngawhare, "what say the stars? are they propitious to your embassy?" Pakapaka replied, "Man of understanding, without doubt you have observed that the stars are numerous near the moon, presaging war. Last night, if you consulted the skies,

Digitized by Google

you must have seen that a star was close to the moon, an undoubted prediction of a great calamity." Ngawhare asked no further question.

"SOUP TO-MORROW," placarded upon the back of a turtle sprawling helplessly in a restaurant window, raises some small languid feeling of interest in passers-by, even when they have not the remotest expectation or intention of gormandizing upon the unhappy stranger. How great, therefore, must have been the interest felt in the twelve distinguished gentlemen who, to the multitude assembled in that public square, represented the turtle, and who were equally unconscious of their impending fate. Meantime every man present veiled the implacable enemy beneath the courteous host, and impatiently awaited the assembly of the tribe, that he might partake of turtle soup in revenge for the death of Anatipa. Not a man, not a woman, not even a child that could tell its right hand from its left, but knew that the decree had gone forth devoting to slaughter the representatives of the northern tribe, and kept the secret. Civilized man can keep to the death a secret affecting his own home or the honour of his family, but he does not know the meaning of a national secret—it is a thing beyond his comprehension. If his people yearn after communism, deism, socialism, or any other ism, or if his princes misbehave themselves, forthwith he takes the whole world into his confidence, and proclaims the backsliding to the five corners of the earth. Uncivilized man scorns the idea of keeping secret anything regarding himself as an injury to

Digitized by Google

society, but a national secret he never betrays; as some of the late immigrants in Maoria have learned at a cost which has already exceeded that of the Abyssinian war. England, too, may one day learn to her sorrow that a semi-civilized nation can cherish for generations a secret purpose. Is there not even now a gigantic European-Asiatic power, faithful to its hidden traditions of universal empire, crouching on our Indian frontiers and biding its time for the final spring?

To return to our soup. Patience was exhausted upon the mainland before the return of the expedition from Ahana. Six days, twice the ordinary duration of a westerly gale, had elapsed, and the whole tribe had assembled and were impatiently expecting the return of Karaka. For a day or so the gusts of wind had been more moderate, and longer intervals of calm had occurred between them; above the bar, across the mouth of the river, no longer roared and foamed the high white walls of surf, forbidding entrance or egress to far more powerful vessels than frail canoes.

On the seventh day, smoke arising from a hill seaward of Ngutukaka, on which a look-out party were stationed, gave the long wished-for notice that the canoes were approaching. Presently, taking advantage of the top of high water, when the bar was at the smoothest, they crossed it without accident, and were soon alongside of the landing-place, eagerly listening to the great news of the arrival of the embassy and of its impending destruction.

Karaka belonged to the order of men who, to their sorrow, possess greater instinct, and can draw in-

* note 7. page 195.

Digitized by Google

ductions and fathom motives with more accuracy than their fellows.

When his brother Te Wira told him how he had opposed the destruction of the embassy, and how the Tohunga had obtained its condemnation by appealing to the warriors, he at once penetrated the selfish motive of the soothsayer in wishing to be the sole possessor of "*mana*" sufficient to invoke a response from the spirits, by whom all believed that they lived surrounded. He felt dissatisfied with himself, as well as with the course of events. Had he been present, a word to the Tohunga, hinting that his motive in wishing for the destruction of the ambassadors was understood, would have effectually silenced him; beside this, he felt that the Tohunga feared him, and, had he been the Ariki, would not have dared to oppose his wish by an appeal to the warriors. He remembered, like an almost forgotten dream, the suspicions which had crossed his mind, when, at the *Runanga* held before his father's death, the Tohunga had first proposed, and then opposed, his being named the Ariki of the tribe. Now that it was too late he saw all; and, but that his philosophy forbade him regret the past, he would have regretted that, out of deference to his elder brother, he had refused to pilot the state canoe of the Ngatiroa. He had refused the chief seat in the stern; and if the ill-steered vessel upset from mismanagement, whose would be the blame? But Maoris never troubled themselves to lament the past, and the name of Fate or Chance,

Digitized by Google

or whatever rules the destinies of men, was to them unknown, They accepted the living present, and whatever it gave birth to, good or evil. Karaka consented to what it was out of his power to prevent, and the ambassadors were informed that on the following day the assembled tribe would answer their proposals.

On the eventful morning the tribe arrayed themselves for the ceremony. Their hair decorated with feathers, and wearing their finest shawls, they early surrounded the guest-house, for it was reported that the ambassadors would receive their reply after the morning meal. Presently a train of women approached, bearing covered baskets of a peculiar shape, which were used when food of unusual delicacy was offered to guests, ordinary food being served in uncovered baskets. The ambassadors marked this additional mark of appetising attention with congratulatory glances, anticipating a meal of the choicest spoils of Ahana. The baskets were placed before them, a thousand eyes were fixed upon them; they slowly uncovered them, and found they were filled with garbage, the signal of death. They would have sprung to their weapons, which hung upon the walls behind them, that they might have the satisfaction of dying fighting with arms in their hands, but this was denied them. The nearest warriors overpowered and slew them before they could rise. But one escaped the slaughter. A Ngatiroa chief, who had been comparing genealogies with one of the Rarawa, discovered that the latter was in some way related to him—was perhaps his seventeenth cousin; he had, therefore, with-

Digitized by Google

out communicating his intention to any one, taken his place behind his connection, and on the appearance on the board of the Maori bull's head, he threw his garment over him and embraced him, loudly exclaiming, "I save my relation!"

The solitary chief saved was directed to choose an attendant from those who had accompanied his party, the others being as a matter of course detained as slaves, and return to his tribe with the account of how the men of the river received embassies from their enemies; in other words, with the Ngatiroa defiance and declaration of war.

A nation living in the belief that war is the normal state of man, and ever ready to support their creed with the arms which were never out of their hands, required no preparation for battle. Every able-bodied Ngatiroa was a soldier; their fortifications were in their own opinion perfect; their stores were full of food, and they were ready and willing to play out the grand game to which they had challenged their distant neighbours. The question was, were they to act upon the offensive or defensive? Their own choice pointed to the former line of action, but, without the assistance of the tribes living up the river, they could not attempt to invade the North. With the utmost expedition the heads of the ambassadors who had been slain were hard baked, till they presented the appearance with which the zeal of the early visitors to Maoria has made the world familiar, for there is scarcely a museum in the world unprovided with a "New Zealand head."

Digitized by Google

The heads, cured by an art as yet neither extinct or unpractised, were sent in charge of some of the chiefs to be shown to the up-river tribes, with an invitation to join in an invasion of the North. The great Maniawhere Tribe, upon whose decision depended whether or no the rest of the up-river tribes returned a favourable reply, declined to join the Ngatiroa. They said, "The root of the quarrel is not straight. Had you slain those men at once without rubbing faces, you would have acted correctly. As it is, you have performed an act of treachery, and we shall not come at your back." Nothing disheartened by this refusal of support, the Ngatiroa awaited the attack, confident of adding to the renown of their maiden fortress. If they could not play at invading their neighbours, the finest game in life, they would, the next best thing, defend themselves in an impregnable fortress; and this they could do without the assistance of allies, presumably jealous of the fortunate possessors of the strongest citadel, the richest eel weir, and the greatest number of gentlemen by descent of any tribe in the island.

Spies, or perhaps we should say scouts, performed an important part in Maoria warfare. To enter the country of an enemy as a spy and converse with the inhabitants was an impossibility. Every man was known to his fellows; besides, the different accent of the various tribes was so marked that a man's nationality could always be detected by his tongue. The scouts were the bravest and most active warriors, and proceeded upon their hazardous duty either singly or in

Digitized by Google

twos and threes. Scouts shunned roads, and, when approaching an enemy's village, avoided the paths which were sure to be watched, and, worming their way through the forest during the night, concealed themselves in a tree, or other commanding place, from whence they could see what was taking place in their enemies' lines; or, under cover of the darkness, they would crawl to the defences and strive to listen to the plans of their enemies. When detected, flight was their only chance of escape from death by torture; and a man fatigued by such dangerous duties was placed at a disadvantage when pitted against fresh men, whose lives were not staked upon the event. To have scouted successfully was therefore a most honourable claim to distinction, and one sought after by the most promising young warriors.

Ngutukaka was separated from the estuary on which lived the Rarawa by forty miles of wild hilly country, which the termination of the last war between the tribes had left wholly depopulated, the Rarawa having removed to the north side of the estuary. Latterly they had reoccupied its southern side, and there the Ngatiroa scouts reported they were concentrating. Day after day the scouts brought tidings that large numbers of men were crossing from the north side of the Firth. The attack would not therefore be much longer delayed. Finally, the news was brought that the enemy was setting fire to and burning the country through which the road lay. Maori roads, or war paths as they might be more correctly designated, whenever it

Digitized by Google

was possible, ran along the crests of mountain-ranges, to secure the wandering warriors from ambush and attack while unavoidably scattered upon the line of march. To be thus surprised and attacked they were peculiarly liable in the lowlands, from the dense vegetation, which in many places obliged them to march in Indian file.

The road from Ngutukaka to the north, after crossing the river, proceeded for some miles along the sandy beach, and then, coming to precipitous rocks, struck inland, to revert again to the shore, as soon as the formation of the coast admitted of its being used as a road. The boundary of the two tribes was a sluggish stream which crawled through a swampy plain, situated nearly halfway between the two estuaries. At least, this was asserted to be the boundary by the northern tribes, while the Ngatiroa asserted that their boundary was upon the top of a ridge about two miles further north. This strip of worthless ground tradition said was the origin of the quarrel between the tribes. Onéwhero certainly had been the scene of numerous battles, and it, or its neighbourhood, was about to become the scene of another. In the centre of the plain the road passed through a swamp in which stood the remains of an ancient forest. The swamp had been formed by a tree dropping across the course by which the rainfall found its way to the neighbouring river, and the damming up of the water had caused the forest to fall into decay, and left a lingering hospital of giants rapidly returning to their mother earth. The burning suns of summer had

Digitized by Google

dried up the swamp ; and the decaying forest, full of rank dry grass and reeds, blazed so fiercely when fired by the Rarawa, that the smoke which arose from it at once carried the tale of its destruction to Ngutukaka. For several days afterwards the spies who returned reported that the trees were burning ; at last some heavy rain fell, and they reported that the fires were extinguished, and that the blackened trunks of some of the giant pine-trees were still standing, while others were lying prostrate.

By-and-by the scouts brought back word that no more parties had joined the Rarawa, and that the latter were manœuvring preparatory to marching. The time had therefore arrived for Karaka to execute the plan he had privately resolved upon when the tribes of the upper Waitebuna refused their co-operation. In Maori warfare the attacking army was invariably the stronger, and its defeat, if it occurred, was usually the result of an unsuccessful attack upon some fortress. Karaka resolved to reverse the established order of warfare, and march forth to give the invaders combat. The description his scouts brought him of the burned swamp in the Onéwhero determined him in the selection of a field on which to fight the battle. In time of active war the authority of the war chief superseded all authority whatever; not only that of the Ariki and the head chiefs, but even that of public opinion. Whatever the war chief did or ordered, the public applauded and obeyed.

Karaka had daily manœuvred his army, and marched it about the country, seeking upon every variety of

Digitized by Google

rough ground to harden and improve the endurance of his men; and the rapidity with which they formed front, charged, changed front, broke into parties for pursuit, re-formed column, and so on, could not have been equalled by any troops less lightly armed. Charging in wedge-shaped column or phalanx, the best form in which to attack when men fight by the light of their enemies' eyes, and not in the sulphurous mist of "the grave of valour," as our ancestors called gunpowder, was the favourite Maori manœuvre both upon parade and in battle, and in this Karaka had exercised his army till even he was satisfied. On their final field-day he addressed them, and told them that upon no battle-field had he seen so swift and solid an advance, and that the next time they charged, it should be through the ranks of the Rarawa. Accordingly, he ordered all to be ready that afternoon when the sun had run three-fourths of his course; every man to bring sufficient food for himself for three days. Upon the troops parading, he walked along the line, saying here and there to a man in the decline or in the beginning of life, "You will remain," never giving any reason or allowing any one to dare to ask him why. Turning to those who were to remain behind, he addressed to them a few words of caution, desiring them to be vigilant during his absence; and, naming his brother, Te Wira, his deputy in military matters during his absence, he formed up his line of march.

Assuming the place of command, the centre of the left flank of the departing column, with a prodigous

Digitized by Google

bound into the air he led off the war dance and song. England, it has been said, will never look again upon the like of those majestic regiments of guards who marched from London to fight at Alma and Inkermann. So Maoria, since that fatal day, has never looked upon so splendid a body of men as those, who, taller and finer even than the British Guardsmen, shook the ground around Ngutukaka, as with voice and foot they kept time with the tramp and the song of the fearless Karaka. The dance finished, the army commenced its march, and was rapidly ferried across the river at Kauroa. Forming up his men upon the north bank, Karaka briefly addressed them, telling them that the Tohunga and himself had the previous night consulted the auspices, and that the spirits promised them an easy victory. He then announced that he required volunteers for the advanced guard; men who could trust to their own fleetness to rejoin their comrades after making an attack upon the enemy's out-posts. More than the required number immediately stepped forth, and grievously were those young men disappointed whom the general for his own reasons relegated to the main body.

In the second watch of the night the army reached Onéwhero, and laid down to rest. Before the dawn began to break, three hundred choice young men, under the command of a noted warrior, all of them smeared over with charcoal, stood round the blackened stumps or crouched behind the logs through which the road passed. The main body was in ambush two-thirds of a

Digitized by Google

mile distant. Long, many, and anxious were the looks the picked body cast northward from their ambush before they were gratified by the sight of men moving along the top of the range, and the advanced guard of the Rarawa was discovered marching carelessly and confidently along.

So far well; and a momentary gleam of intense satisfaction thrilled through the ambushed men, damped by the observation that the main body was scarcely separated by a furlong from the advance.

It does not, however, take long to take away a man's life, and a good many were taken during the few seconds the Rarawa took in traversing the small space which separated them from their surprised and overpowered advance guard.

The preconcerted signal for the attack upon the Rarawa was the last of their advance coming in line with the most forward man of the ambush. Then the jaws of the human trap silently closed upon its prey. Loudly the victims shouted with their last breath the cry of alarm, "*He whakariki! he whakariki!*" "a surprise!" "an attack!" And surprised and attacked upon both flanks, down they fell. In the advance of the Rarawa was "*Te Taniwha,*" the water monster, a person of great notoriety. He was a man of enormous bulk and of prodigious strength, which in the early prime of his life had gained him his name. His tribe were assaulting the land defences of a Pa upon a river side, when he plunged into the stream, and diving, swam down under the water, rising where his eye or his luck had detected a weak place in the

Digitized by Google

river palisading. Standing up to his shoulders in water, he had torn down many of the posts before the enemy engaged in front perceived him. The awful appearance of the monster had already caused great alarm, when a coward, the like of whom has lost many a battle, shouted, "*He Taniwha! He Taniwha!*" The cry spread among the defenders of the fortress; a panic seized them, and they were destroyed.

From that hour "*Te Taniwha,*" as he was forthwith named, became a celebrity. His fame increased with years, for he was supposed to posses a supernatural "*mana*" or power, and his tribe, situated in the far north, were never defeated in a battle or unsuccessful in a siege at which he was present.

Upon the murder of the ambassadors by the Ngatiroa, the Rarawa had sent the fiery cross or call to arms throughout the north, and had received large promises of assistance as soon as the harvest was secured. In the meantime they were urged by their allies to march themselves without delay, that they might force the Ngatiroa to seek refuge within their fortress, and prevent them gathering their fields of *kumiras* and *taro*, the acquisition of which by the invading force would greatly facilitate the siege. The tribe of Te Taniwha had sent him as the precursor of their coming, and that his "*mana*" might be as a tower of strength to the Rarawa.

The first war cry from the Ngatiroa rose from Te Matuku, a powerful young man, who upon the signal to attack, as the black shadows rose from their am-

Digitized by Google

bush, rushed with almost more than mortal speed and fury upon the Taniwha, and with a blow of his bone sword felled the monster to the earth, upon which he rolled like a gigantic walrus. Joyfully Matuku shouted the cry, which only the man who has taken or killed the first man in a battle is entitled to raise, "*Ki ahau te mataika!*" "Mine is the first!" Then striking two or three more blows right and left, he turned and fled with the rest of his party, with the whole army of the Rarawa thundering close upon their heels. Fast and furious was the race for the nearest cover, nearly a mile distant. Those who had overrated their own speed of foot paid the penalty with their lives. The unburnt swamp was reached and entered, the fleetest of the Rarawa had passed, their main body had entered the cover, rushing along in full pursuit and high disorder, when from the rank grass rose a terrific war song, and a solid phalanx charged them in flank, crushing them with the ease with which now-a-days an iron floating fort passes over and sinks a wooden ship. Then turned the pursued, and in their turn became the pursuers; they and their main army chasing, killing, and capturing for many a mile; the honour of killing the last man in the pursuit being the object of eager competition. Matuku, who had thrown aside his heavy sword and armed himself with the king of weapons, a spear, was among the last who relinquished the chase of the Rarawa.

When Karaka charged the enemy, his place was in the centre of the column, but in the shock of battle he

Digitized by Google

stumbled or tripped, and was thrown heavily to the ground unperceived by his troops, who passed on in hot pursuit. He rose surrounded by the dead and the dying, and was looking in the long grass for his sword, when he was spied by two unwounded men of the Rarawa who had sought safety in concealment. "That is Karaka, the great war chief of Waitebuna, and unarmed," said one of them, to whom he was known, and they advanced to attack him. Karaka saw them approaching. His war cry would have brought hundreds to his assistance, but it would also have stopped the pursuit. He therefore drew his small mere of green stone from his belt and advanced to meet the attack of the pair, who instantly rushed upon him. He partly parried the spear of the first with the little weapon in his right hand, and the spear passed downwards through his right thigh, as he cleft the head of his enemy with his mere. The spear of his second assailant he attempted to parry with his left hand, but it passed through his side. Grasping the spear, he gave his enemy a kick which levelled him with the earth, and instantly followed it up by a blow from his mere; he then drew the spear from his side, and, sick and faint, sat down to await the return of some of his men. Parties of the pursuers soon returned, driving before them their prisoners with their hands bound; and when it became known that Karaka was severely wounded, many lives were instantly taken for payment (*utu*), while according to Maori custom the principal captives were brought before Karaka to

Digitized by Google

receive the *coup de grace.* When a prisoner of distinction was brought before the victorious General, the captor would proclaim this is—so and so—as the name might be; men of note being well known by repute to their enemies. Upon being brought before the conqueror, the captive, as a matter of course, received a blow upon the side of the head, which he held forward for the purpose. At length a great body of warriors approached, surrounding a single prisoner, many having mingled with his particular captors, that they might boast that they had assisted in the capture of so great a man as the famous Ariki of the Rarawa.

Karaka, upon this very noble captive being brought before him, with stately courtesy rose to receive him.

"Welcome! welcome! welcome my enemy!" said he; "come and see the might of my vengeance!" He then gave directions that the captive should be conducted over the field of battle and treated as an honoured guest. The old Roman feeling of wishing to make a display of their captives of the highest rank sometimes caused a few lives to be spared. Party after party returned from the pursuit, every man of them expecting to find untouched the spoils of those he had killed in the grand mélée or in the pursuit. Matuku found the giant he had struck down still lived. The bloated monster was seated upon a fallen tree, exposed to the jeers and taunts of a crowd who gazed upon him with wonder. Rage, grief, and the blood which had streamed from his wound and dried upon

Digitized by Google

his head and body, made him so terrifically hideous that his appearance justified his claim to be considered more or less than human. Upon the appearance of the captor of the giant he was loudly congratulated; they hailed him as "the *Toa* (hero) of Onéwhero," and bestowed upon him the name of his captive. Thenceforth he would be known as Matuku te Taniwha, and his first name would gradually fall into disuse. All wished, if possible, to take the monster alive to Ngutukaka, and to this the consent of the war chief was at once readily given.

Messengers were at once despatched to announce this great victory to their friends, and to carry the news and particulars of the fight, and of the capture of the Ariki and Te Taniwha, to the tribes of the upper Waitebuna, it being hoped that as they had commenced the war so successfully without any assistance, their neighbours might now feel disposed to join them.

The first thought of the victors after the battle was the care of their wounded. They were at once looked to, and their wounds carefully dressed. Scarcely less affectionately were their dead handled. The bodies of the most distinguished were placed in litters for transportation to Ngutukaka, while those of lesser note were either burned or sunk in some of the neighbouring swamps; the greatest possible precaution being taken that they should not be found by the enemy, who would be certain to search for them the next time they marched that way in force.

Digitized by Google

Over the orgies of the battle-field we pass in silence; to the head curings, and so on, as a truthful historian, we must allude, but we cannot describe nor would the reader wish to read of them. This much, with truth, we may say—beyond precautions against escape, no unnecessary cruelty was practised upon the prisoners.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

THE day following the battle the *tawa* commenced its short march homewards, sorrowful though victorious. Nothing human is perfect, or bought without a price. They had gained a victory great beyond their dreams, but they had paid for it. The remains of many of their dead were concealed in the swamp of Onéwhero; they brought back a train of corpses and wounded men, and, worst grief of all, their General was numbered amongst the latter. Karaka with difficulty was persuaded to husband his strength, and submit to be carried upon a litter, but at length he yielded to the entreaties of his friends. Upon the army reaching the bank of the Onéwhero stream, Nini, the Ariki of the Rarawa, announced that he should go no further. Upon being brought before Karaka, he said, "I have come to the boundary of my land; I shall die here." It was without effect that Karaka said, "I have treated you kindly; come with

Digitized by Google

me to Ngutukaka, and there I shall release you." Nini answered, "Never shall it be said that I entered Ngutukaka as a prisoner. My country is now grieving for my death; I will save my tribe from the shame of my having been a prisoner." His captors were therefore obliged to content themselves with exhibiting his head upon their triumphal entry into Ngutukaka. It was late in the day when the army reached the wide sandy beach from which the fortress was plainly visible. The sight of it appeared to revive the consciousness of the giant Te Taniwha; he had hitherto been driven along like a dumb beast, and, indeed, had not spoken since his capture. He looked long at the great hill fort, then, suddenly rushing through those who were between him and the ocean, plunged into the surf, into which none of his captors cared to follow him. He then boldly struck out to sea, his huge frame rising on the crests of the rollers. The army halted spontaneously, and gazed after him as long as he was in sight; even his balked tormentors, as he rose on the crests of the waves, cheering him and calling out, "He is a *taniwha!*" "Well done the *taniwha!*" That night the army remained at Kauroa, the dead and wounded being quietly sent on to the fortress; and on the following day the victors made their triumphant entry into Ngutukaka, every soul in the place coming forth to welcome the conquerors.

The maidens, waving green branches, sang songs of triumph, hailing by name those who had distinguished themselves; and the name of the young warrior who

Digitized by Google

had "taken the first" in the skirmish of the advanced guards was more frequently on their lips than that of any other warrior who had exhibited his prowess in the great battle. Matuku, the hero of the day, had, alas! a great misfortune, which, even in the hour of his triumph, threatened to deprive him of the reward for the hope of which he had fought so bravely. He had a sad blot on his escutcheon; he was the son of a slave. In early life, when Karaka was learning the trade of war under his father, Te Au o te Rangi, at the sack of a town upon the east coast, he burst into a house, and pronounced the dreadful words, which have carried dismay and doom for God alone knows how many thousand years, or to how many myriads of human hearts, "You are my slaves!" Among his captives he found a young lady of surpassing beauty. Some said that she had touched the heart of her captor; but when this report reached his ear, which was upon the following day, he silenced it by presenting the lady to a friend who had greatly admired her beauty.

In the course of time the lady gave birth to a son at Ngutukaka, who soon displayed a surprising resemblance to the man who had taken his mother captive. Female gossips, who remarked the likeness, were forced to attribute it to one of those caprices of nature, which occasionally stamp upon the offspring a mark or resemblance to some person or thing seen by the mother. If any of Karaka's companions in arms could have given a reason why the boy was

Digitized by Google

like Karaka, he would have scorned to betray a secret of no public importance, and which an honoured chief had buried in oblivion. The reputed father of the lad, a man of no mean rank, had a family by the fair stranger; but, of course, they occupied a very different position to that which they would have had he married a lady of his own tribe; in plain language, they were considered illegitimate. Matuku grew up a fine stalwart fellow, and was looked upon as "a promising young man," which meant that he was a strong able youth, a good runner, a master of the spear exercise, and that he ought to turn out a stout warrior. This indeed was the height of his own ambition, until Love, the great master, entered into his heart and told him to strive to distinguish himself, and that if he succeeded he would gain her he desired for his wife, or if not, he would find relief in death, which was better than life without the woman he loved.

The women having welcomed the victors, the garrison performed a dance of welcome, which was followed by the event of the day, the war dance of the conquerors, many of whom held in their hands human heads, the lips of which, but two days before, had breathed defiance to their slayers. Ah, war! miserable war! The savage instinct which impels man to battle is the same in the highly educated man, fighting with all the appliances of science, and in the savage, fighting with his primitive wooden weapons. Whether the combatants are clad in aprons to hide their nakedness, or decked out in gold and silver, their object is the same—to inflict death

Digitized by Google

upon the greatest possible number of their fellows. Indeed, the savage has the advantage, for he has no fear of death, and consequently more thoroughly enjoys the excitement of the conflict.

No entreaties could prevent Karaka from assuming his place at the head of the war dance. His absence, he said, would have a bad effect both upon his friends and upon his enemies. He remained dancing until his leg swelled to such a size that he was compelled to leave off. He then announced that he would hold a war court for the decision of all disputes which had arisen during the late brief campaign.

There must be disputes among the victors after a battle, whether they be for ribbons, stars, and medals, or for Banda and Kirwee prize money, to be decided in luminous language by an eloquent old judge, assisted by an army of lawyers, fourteen years after its capture; or whether they occur among half-naked barbarians for the honour of having killed this or that man, and the right to keep his spoil, consisting of a shark's tooth or a green stone. Certainly the barbarians had the advantage of prompt and impartial justice, so long withheld, in the instance of Kirwee, from those who fought in scarlet, for the Maori war chief heard and settled upon the spot every claim brought forward.

Many sought the Tohunga in his *tapu* grove, and rich were the presents he received. Had not his promise of an easy victory been fully realized, and does not man ever seek to gain the good-will of those who are supposed to be endowed with powers beyond this earth?

Digitized by Google

Matuku te Taniwha sought the Tohunga, and laid before him the choicest spoils of the battle.

"Go, my son," said the soothsayer, who had penetrated the young man's secret, "ask now and be successful."

Proudly the young man stepped forth from the grove, and approached the tribune upon which Karaka was seated, administering justice. The youthful likeness of the old chief stood before him.

"*E Pa!* (Oh, Sir!) give me my wife!"

"Give you who?" said the chief, regarding the young man with kindly eyes.

"Give me Tui for my wife."

"Give you my child Tui, the best of our maidens?" said the chief, his looks falling, and regarding the young man with no favourable glance.

Father and son harshly regarded one another; then the chief looked round upon the multitude by whom he was surrounded. The request grated upon his feelings, for he loved Tui as though she were his own child, and, moreover, Maoris had a strong dislike to the marriage of first cousins. He pondered; to refuse was to sentence to death the proud young man, who, he well knew, would not survive the disgrace of a public refusal; to reject the suit of the hero of the day, and cause him to take a leap from the *tapu* grove and fall a mangled corpse upon the rocks beneath, would be to deprive the tribe of an accomplished young warrior; while, above all, Nature pleaded with him to grant the

Digitized by Google

request. He yielded, and yielded nobly; sacrificing with his consent the secret of his life.

"My son, my own, my undoubted son, she is thine, now and for ever!" "Tui," continued he, "come hither."

The trembling maiden advanced from amongst her companions, and stood before her uncle. Then, addressing her as the all-powerful war chief of the tribe;

"Tui," said he, "here is your husband; you are tapued to Matuku; you are his while you live, and after you have returned to the earth."

A deep drawn breath of applause stirred the assembly, and murmurs of "Well done, Karaka! just like Karaka!" might have been distinguished.

The chief proceeded, "Listen! I have not finished. Te Rawhitu, come hither. I have long rejected your suit for my daughter Hira. You fought stoutly in the front; my daughter loves you, you have gained her for your wife."

Again a murmur of applause shook the vast audience, happy in possessing a leader capable of sacrificing his private feelings for the public good. Let not the reader suppose that these sudden marriages were the cause of much violence being offered to the feelings of the young ladies. Hira and Te Rawhitu had long loved; and though Te Taniwha was declared to be the husband of Tui, in point of fact Karaka's assent merely amounted to a betrothal. Te Taniwha had acquired the right to woo the lady, with the privilege of spearing any man who presumed to bestow upon her a loving glance. He might

Digitized by Google

affect the society of his betrothed, and offer her every attention in his power, above all things taking care not to be obtrusive; and in a few weeks, months, or years, he might persuade his bride "to turn to him." Should he weary of the pursuit, and "turn" to another woman, the probability was that the lady, being of great rank, would obtain a divorce. Strange and absurd as it may appear, in marriages made by the relations of the parties, and in state marriages, if the term may be applied to alliances made between the families of the ruling chiefs of different tribes, it was not always the lady who was the reluctant, or apparently reluctant party; sometimes the husband usurped the privilege always conceded to the wife, of showing "how virtuous she was," and insisted upon retaining his bachelor freedom. It is almost unnecessary to add that these were exceptional cases.

"The fall of the leaf," as summer is called in Maoria, for it is then that the leaves wither and die, had passed, and the crops were secured and stored in the magazines before the scouts brought tidings that the Northern tribes were again assembling in great strength upon the southern side of the firth. Who, alas! should now lead the Ngatiroa forth to victory, for Karaka, the great soldier of the river, lay dying of his wound. He could no longer conceal, what he had known from the first, that the wound in his breast was mortal. Calmly he was sinking to his rest, nursed with untiring affection by his children Hira and Matuku. Though no longer able to walk, he persisted in performing the duties

Digitized by Google

of his great office, upon the due execution of which depended the safety of his native land. Daily, when the weather permitted, carried upon a litter, he made the rounds of the fort, inspecting the magazines of food, and conversing cheerfully with his chiefs, who anxiously looked for a word of recognition. He bade them be of good courage, and never to leave the fort; and then they might do as their ancestors did before them, laugh to scorn all attempts of hostile feet to enter the renowned citadel. Confidence and comfort were inspired by the words of the dying warrior; and, while all felt the greatness of their impending loss, it was a satisfaction to resolve loyally to follow his parting advice. Upon the night previous to his departure, he expressed the wish to see his brother, Te Wira, alone. Long they sat together in silence; Karaka wished to say that he blamed himself for not accepting the chieftainship of the tribe, but when it came to the point, he found that he could not utter words which might hurt the feelings of his brother. He therefore commenced by speaking of their father, and of the days of their early life. At length he told Te Wira, that he was haunted by the dying words of their parent—"Beware of the sea;" he feared that from the ocean would come their destruction. Still, if they went not to the sea, the sea could not come to them; he therefore cautioned his brother to attempt no sortie, should the virgin fortress have to suffer a siege, and, embracing him, entreated him to forgive him if he had ever unintentionally hurt his feelings in the execution of

Digitized by Google

his office. Te Wira, much moved, promised to follow his advice, and assured him that never had man had a better, a kinder, or a more considerate brother. The following day Karaka was carried into the public square, that he might take his departure for the land of spirits after the manner of his nation. He demanded of the breathless multitude whether any man was suffering from any unredressed injury caused by himself. There was no reply. He then conjured them to be unceasing in vigilance, and in obedience to his brother Te Wira, who would be, both their Ariki, and their war chief. Let them imitate the virtues of their forefathers, and the renown of Ngutukaka would increase throughout the Island. No people in the world were so brave and virtuous as the Maoris, and no tribe surpassed in valour or in virtue the Ngatiroa. He left them in time of war, but that was the natural state of man; until all the tribes in the Island and all the Islands in the world made peace, war would not cease upon the earth; and if ever that peace came, man, in a few generations, would increase with such rapidity, that, like the fish in the sea, the strong would soon again pray upon and devour the weak. Never would man resign the delightful excitement of the war dance and the other preparations for battle, the delirium of the strife, and the glory of the conqueror, which death itself was powerless to destroy. Man would cease to make love before he ceased to make war, and woe to the unprepared! Their preparations were so complete, that his heart was at ease, and he had nothing to wish for but

Digitized by Google

for the happy time, when, with their allies at their back, they would invade the north. Their allies had kept back, but they were looking on; and if the war proved, as they expected, a long one, their allies could no more continue to look on without joining in the strife, than the fort-dogs, called together by two of their number fighting, could for long peaceably watch the struggle. He felt assured that before long their allies would afford them effectual succour. He was exhausted, but with his last breath he felt irresistibly impelled to repeat the dying words of his father, "Beware of the great sea! beware of the treacherous sea!" So saying, he went away. Then arose from earth to heaven a long lasting wail of anguish. All deeply felt the irreparable loss of their accomplished general in the hour of danger as a personal misfortune; and the women of the tribe, by an unconcerted and spontaneous movement, cut off and strewed their hair round the bier of their beloved chief. With a powerful enemy daily expected in front of the fortress, there was little time for displays of state. They therefore obeyed the thoughtful directions of the departed Karaka, and at once carried away his remains and concealed them in a cave in the mountains.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

UNCEASING preparations were carried forward to resist the coming invasion. The fishing-suburb of Kauroa was destroyed, that it might not afford shelter to the enemy, and the palisades were floated up the Mohaka stream, broken up, and stored in the fortress for fuel. The harvest was gathered, and carefully garnered in pits in the fort; not a fine day passed without the gigantic sea-nets being hauled upon the sandy north shore; and all the fish they contained which could be dried in the sun, were prepared and laid in store. Scarcely a day elapsed without the arrival of canoes loaded with provisions sent as presents from up the river. The upper tribes of the river had refused to enter upon the war, but individuals and families, not having the laws of neutrality before their eyes, were moved by relationship or affection, and brought provisions for the garrison. Some, too, who had left home merely with the intention of taking down provisions, urged

Digitized by Google

either by the desire of making great their names, or by "*aroha*" (love and sorrow in one word) for the garrison, refused to return with their companions, and cast in their lot with that of the defenders of the Fortress. All preparations were finished, even to sinking the most valuable canoes in distant swamps, where it was impossible that they could ever be recovered without the presence of those who had assisted at their concealment; but the enemy delayed making his appearance. This long delay was felt to be an injury, and caused dissatisfaction. They had to undergo a disagreeable operation, the sooner it was over the better; and they naturally felt impatient for the commencement of a siege, of the result of which none felt the slightest misgiving.

At length the North concentrated its might and marched towards the fortress. This time there was no attempt to stay their progress, and at Onéwhero they halted unmolested to *tangi* (weep) for Nini, and all who had fallen, and to vow vengeance upon those who had slain their friends.

The fine weather, it was the close of autumn, favoured them, and they timed their march so that a fleet of their canoes, laden with provisions, crossed the bar as they marched along the sands in front of the fort. "Slow and sure" appeared to be the maxim of the Rarawa, for they made no attempt to cross the river that day. The following day they marched up the river to where the stream divided among the islands, forded it at low water, marched down the left bank, and made

Digitized by Google

their appearance in due form under the walls of the fortress. They danced war dances, sang war songs, taunted the garrison, and announced their intention of building a Pa under their walls, and starving them into submission. To taunts and threats the garrison were deaf as the grim wooden figures, which, from the tops of the palisades, looked down and defied the Rarawa. Not a voice answered, not a man showed himself. In vain the besiegers danced the war dance, sounded the war trumpet, and exhausted their ingenuity in the invention of opprobrious taunts. In haughty silence the garrison mocked their threats. A quarrel, in which one party makes no reply, is not exciting; so, having vainly wasted their fury, the Northern army fixed upon the site of their encampment, a short distance from the fort gates, and as near as the nature of the ground would admit. The actions of the Northern hordes soon showed that they had entered upon the siege with a terrible earnestness of purpose. After the day of their arrival, they wasted no time in idle displays. They marked out the lines of a large Pa, which they proceeded to fortify. This effected, the substantial houses they built made it unmistakably evident that they anticipated, and had undertaken, a long siege. They were indefatigable in storing provisions before the winter came upon them; trains of slaves were perpetually upon the road between their camp and their homes; and, whenever the weather permitted, their canoes risked the short voyage between the river and the northern estuary.

Digitized by Google

While they were engaged in felling pine trees for the palisades of their Pa, some little distance up the river, they were met by a deputation from the tribes of its upper waters, who came to enquire whether the Rarawa and their allies wished the war to extend over the whole river, or whether they were willing to confine it below the ford among the islands between two and three leagues above Ngutukaka ?

The northern tribes had quite enough upon their hands, and had no wish to increase the number of their enemies. The embassy was therefore received very graciously, and assured that the invasion should not extend above the islands.

Literally the first stone was thrown from the fort. The Pa of the Rarawa was completed, and the white palisades made of soft wood, not intended to be permanent, were in position, when, one afternoon while a strong south-west wind was blowing, a shower of red-hot stones slung from the fortress rushed, borne upon its wings, over the camp. These missiles effected the mission upon which they were sent, and, in a few minutes, a fire, which commenced upon the roofs of the houses, was raging with a rapidity and fierceness only to be equalled in a town similarly constructed of wood, reeds, and rushes. The blow fell heavily upon the besiegers. In a few hours they lost the labour of months, and though they could easily renew their fortified camp, their loss in provisions was irreparable.

Then for the first time the triumphant Ngatiroa

Digitized by Google

made a demonstration. In the lunette appeared a body of warriors as if about to sally, and upon the face of the hill fort an immense crowd assembled, waving garments, and shouting cries of welcome and invitations to their enemies to come into Ngutukaka. The Rarawa fell into their ranks, dancing, shouting, and calling upon the besieged to come forth and fight like men, and not to wait till they were conquered by famine. Excited almost to madness by these taunts, the warriors in the outwork danced and sang with such fury that their enemies hoped and expected to see "the great mouth" open, and the besieged sally forth from under their walls; but prudence prevailed, and the gates remained closed.

If the besieged had any expectation that the loss of their camp would force the Rarawa to raise the siege, they were soon undeceived, for their enemies lost not a day in repairing the disaster. They moved their camp some distance down the Mohaka, and again raised fortifications and built houses; and, by cutting a deep trench from the stream above their camp, and leading the aqueduct through the centre of their Pa, secured themselves, as far as was possible, against a second conflagration.

Many months passed without the least symptom of weariness on the part of the besiegers. Winter had come and gone, and the yellow flowers of the *kowhai* were proclaiming mid-spring, when the besieged began to feel that what they had looked upon as bravado, might prove to be stern reality. The Rarawa had for some

Digitized by Google

time been clearing and digging the *kumira* grounds in the neighbourhood. This was not done, as had been supposed, as an empty threat, for they planted large fields of fresh *kumira* and *taro*.

This sight struck a chill into the defenders of Ngutukaka. All ranks and ages dearly loved freedom and the open air, and long confinement and want of change of diet had commenced to do their work. Sickness and discontent were stealthily introducing themselves amongst the garrison. A few old people and a few young children had succumbed, and abandoned the closed fort for the open plains of the next world. This was to be expected as inevitable, but the sagacious Te Wira saw that it would no longer be safe to continue the interdict or *tapu* he had placed upon all egress from the fort. To satisfy the inextinguishable craving for fresh food inherent in all races, except among the vegetarians who live under the laws of the great Hindu legislator, Munu (and even they must have fresh butter), a family had appropriated, killed, and eaten a dog belonging to another *hapu* of the tribe. A dispute about the animal arose between the two families, and so great was the craving, not only for food, but for excitement, that in a very short space of time nearly one half of the garrison, ranged upon the side of the owners of the dog, with arms in their hands were defying the other family and its equally numerous supporters.

With difficulty Te Wira appeased the tumult by telling them that if they would not wait with patience, but insisted upon fighting, he would take off the *tapu*,

Digitized by Google

and that small parties would be allowed egress from the fort to forage and to cut off stragglers. For his own part he had confidence in the dying words of Karaka, and the Great Gates should never be opened till the siege was raised.

That night several parties of daring men lowered themselves from the fortress by flaxen rope ladders, and, taking the paths upon which they had often watched the besiegers, crouched down in ambush. Their enemies were off their guard, and on the following night the foraging parties returned to the fort, bringing with them a few birds, eels, and fresh water cray-fish, and, what was even more acceptable to the garrison at large, a few human heads. These last duly appeared in the morning as decorations of the palisades of the fort, being placed upon the tops of the heads of the carved figures, from whence the Rarawa were invited to come and remove them. The mutual taunts and jeers which then ensued were such as could only have been uttered in the stone age, before an acquaintance with the musket had to a certain extent civilised savage man, by making a distance, usually not within earshot, a general condition of warfare. When man can slay his enemy from a distance, he rightly thinks that he himself runs less risk than in a hand-to-hand encounter; and those terrific battles lately fought with mitrailleuse, chassepot, and needle-gun, would have been infinitely more sanguinary, had the men who waged them been armed with spears of wood or iron.

The character of the war changed from the time of

Digitized by Google

the besieged sending out night parties of foragers. The Rarawa nightly patrolled round the portions of the fort from which they thought it possible men might descend; sometimes surprising those descending, at others being themselves cut off. No longer forbidden to leave the fort, numbers constantly made the attempt. Fathers risked their lives to obtain food for a sick wife or child; lovers went forth that they might once more hear the voice of her they loved; and those who had neither wife, child, or true love, went forth to gain a name, which they considered the greatest gift this world could bestow. All were free to leave the garrison for a time, but it was understood that all who left were bound in honour to return. Men belonging to the upper tribes of the river returned to visit their families and friends, carrying a legible account of the hardships they had undergone in their emaciated appearance; but no further appeal for help was made to the powerful Maniawhere tribe, which at the commencement of the war had refused to afford assistance. At length, however, the ghastly appearance of their connections produced its effect upon them. They had never wished or expected that Ngutukaka should fall, merely that a little of the conceit, of which the Ngatiroa possessed so large a share should be knocked out of them. Besides, the fall of the Ngatiroa fortress would greatly weaken the tribes of the central confederation. It was therefore time to interfere. An embassy was accordingly sent to the Rarawa to inform them that the Maniawhere tribe felt *aroha* (love and sorrow) for the Ngatiroa, and

Digitized by Google

intended shortly to pay them a visit of condolence. This they should do when the siege had lasted one year. It would therefore be requisite that, if the fortress were not by that time taken (of which they had no expectation), the siege should be raised. To these terms the Rarawa offered no opposition. They would raise the siege at the end of the year. Only one short month of the twelvemonth remained unexpired when this condition was forced upon the Rarawa. Their engineers therefore at once entered upon the last effort of their science. An enormous fascine of brushwood was constructed, bound together by flaxen ropes, and of so great a size that the men who rolled it before them did so in security behind the shelter it afforded. When the garrison saw the monstrous engine of destruction approaching, they were filled with fear; there were their enemies under arms, preceded by what looked like the trunk of a great tree, many times magnified. On it came until it reached the *chevaux de frise* in front of the great palisades. It then burst into flames, and burnt so fiercely, that the men upon the fighting stage, which ran along the palisades, were glad to escape into the fort. The valuable posts of *totara* and *konaka* wood, the carved figures upon the tops of which had looked down upon the last siege more than a century before, were soon in flames, but the gates upon the narrow staircase were too strong to be forced, and the impregnable rock again foiled its enemies, who had hoped to be able to enter the inner defences along with the defenders. With the failure of this last blow the skill

Digitized by Google

and patience of the assailants appeared to be exhausted, for a few days afterwards they set fire to their Pa and retreated to their homes.

It is difficult to describe the joy that reigned in Ngutukaka when the siege was raised. If deliverance from pain, protracted suffering, or fear, are the highest material pleasures which poor human nature is capable of enjoying, what must have been felt, at the deliverance from all of these together, by the women and children who had endured them for so long a period, and by their husbands and fathers, who, if they had not so deeply felt the horrors of the situation upon their own account, were struck through the helpless ones depending upon them.

Spies followed the retreating army, and witnessed its transportation to the northern side of the estuary. Then, upon their return, the long closed gates of the fortress were at last thrown open, and forth poured the relieved multitude to enjoy once more the delights of freedom. Down to the river they rushed to drink the sweet waters for which they had so long sighed, and once more to cool their war-worn frames in its ample stream. Singing songs of victory, the warriors danced the war dance, taking pride to themselves as those who had triumphed in the great game.

A few days after the siege was raised, a number of the garrison, whose abodes were at Rotorua and further up the river, left for their homes, taking with them Te Wira, who was much shaken by the long continued anxiety he had undergone. Tomo refused to go because

Digitized by Google

his bosom friend, the Tohunga, declined to accompany him.

For Ngawhare, usually so fond of change of scene, positively refused to go; giving as his reason that the stars presented a most menacing aspect. A great calamity was, he said, evidently at hand, for never had he seen a star so near the moon,—it was almost within her arms.

The morning after the departure of the Ariki and the party for Rotorua, the sun rose with cloudy reluctance, grieving perhaps that it was again its lot to witness the destruction of thousands of human insects, the victims of their own cruel fratricidal rage. A fog covered the river, and it was not dispersed until the sun had risen to some height. No sooner was the opposite side of the bay visible, than in "the Snare," about a league distant, there was seen an object which sent a thrill of pleasure through every soul in the fort. As the fog lifted, the cry arose, "*He ika moana*," "the fish of the great sea!" "the fish of the great sea!"

Forthwith from their houses pour the inhabitants in crowds to where the best view is to be obtained of the black monster knocking about in the surf, with a flock of sea-gulls flying round and lighting upon its carcase. Even at that distance the hump upon its back is visible, and it is pronounced to be a large male sperm whale. It is almost high water, so that there is no time to lose; the dead whale has come in with the flood tide, and, if not secured, will go back to sea with the ebb. The warriors run

Digitized by Google

down to the landing-place on the Waitebuna, and, jumping into their canoes, are ferried across as fast as possible, the boats returning to take across fresh numbers of those impatiently waiting upon the beach. The young girls and children follow with slower footsteps, while the women and the old people stand still and gaze with eager eyes at their husbands, brothers, and sons running along the north sands in hundreds; but look! the foremost are slackening in their speed, and regard the whale doubtingly—"Great Spirit! what is that?" Ah! short-sighted Ngatiroa, it is destruction and death. The jaws of the tremendous trap have closed, and from the sand-hills behind it rises high and loud the war song of the Rarawa; two compact phalanges charge forth, the one dashes in pursuit of those who have fallen into the trap baited with the mock whale, the other rushes to seize the canoes, scarcely pausing to slay the wretches who come in its way.

When the Mania intimated to the northern tribes their intention of coming down to raise the siege, the Rarawa engineers were driven to exert their highest skill. The haughty fortress must fall quickly, or the Ngatiroa would escape the vengeance due to their treachery and arrogance. Secrecy was enjoined, and small parties from the tribes present at the siege were sent home to kill all the dogs, dye their skins black, and sew them together in long strips. This done, the siege was raised, as we have seen, and the army of invasion returned home, only to return at night, as soon as they had manufactured of the long canes of the forest

Digitized by Google

the likeness of the frame of a whale. This was covered with the dyed skins, and fish were fastened here and there upon it, to attract and deceive two sets of gulls, those of the sea and those of Ngutukaka. Before daylight the bait was placed in the place so appropriately named "The Snare," and with furious curiosity the northern army watched the effect of the trap so secretly contrived, and so skilfully laid. Alas! when we think of the hundreds of brave, industrious men, the hundreds of mild good women, and the hundreds of helpless children, who, that morning, looked their last upon the sun, and of the thousands who fell in internecine war in Maoria in the two centuries which followed the fall of Ngutukaka, the ominous prelude to the devastating conflicts which prepared the way for the *Pakeha*, we feel how little we can understand the government of this world, and its unequal distribution of happiness and misery. Until, however, that government is changed and the inequality of fate redressed, to be unprepared for war is to disobey the instinct implanted in man, and to neglect the innumerable warnings to be found in the pages of history.

The hardships of the siege had fallen with the greatest severity upon those whose part it was to bear their sufferings without complaint, and who, by their sex, were denied the relief produced by active exertion. Long and weary had the days been to the women, compelled to hide their grief for the husbands and children they had lost, and deprived of the alleviation found by the men in their efforts for the defence.

Ever seeking the houses in which sickness or death

Digitized by Google

was present, and by her heavenly serenity producing sympathetic calmness, Tui had been the ministering angel of the beleaguered garrison. Her presence, and the sound of her sweet voice, diffused relief even in those houses in which death had reaped the richest harvest, and the green fruit had fallen in the greatest profusion. The attentions of her lover enabled her to make little presents of fresh food, which—for such is poor human nature—made her appearance doubly welcome where sickness was present. Matuku bore a charmed life; during the latter part of the siege he had spent more of his time without, than within, the fortress. None had so often braved a descent from, and a return to, the rock.

When he first brought the presents he had obtained at the risk of his head, and laid them before the mistress of his heart, she entreated him not to peril his life, saying that he knew how little she cared for food. He knew that, he said, but he also knew that she would find pleasure in giving away what was so much desired and required by others.

The discovery that her lover was ready to hazard his life for the sake of affording her pleasure, had seemed to etherealize the girl, and the regretful tenderness with which she constantly regarded him, betrayed her conviction that they were never destined to be united.

On the morning when the sun for the last time illuminated an unconquered fortress upon the shores where it still loves to shine so brightly, Tui was seated in the house of her uncle, Te Wira, finishing the border of a large shawl, which she had commenced at the be-

Digitized by Google

ginning of the siege; her lover was beside her, watching the progress of her active fingers, for he secretly hoped that his betrothed was engaged upon their wedding garment, to finish which she had remained in the fortress when her uncle left for Rotorua. When the wild cries of alarm arose, Matuku rushed out to ascertain the cause. Returning to the house, he entreated Tui to fly with him. "No, friend of my heart," said she "alone, your escape is certain; encumbered with me, you will be overtaken; fly, I beseech you, and save yourself."

Resolutely the young man answered, "I prefer death with you, to life without you."

"Then, my husband, let it be so," said the girl; for the first time addressing him by the dearest of all names.

She continued, "My love, I have ever loved you; even before the day when you were hailed as the hero of Onewhero, but a noble maiden could not bestow her hand unsought, or during a time of public distress. This shawl I had intended for our bridal garment. That bridal will now never take place in this world; but we can die together, and depart united for the Islands of the Blest."

She then calmly removed the shawl from its frame, and threw it over both their shoulders. Wrapped in it and one anothers' arms, they left the house, taking the path to the *tapu* grove, along which hundreds of panic-stricken wretches were flying, preferring the unknown of the hereafter to the known of this life. Walking slowly,

Digitized by Google

but without a moment's hesitation, they slipped over the cliff, clasped in one anothers' embrace, as though they had not seen the abyss below.

Craning over the precipice stood the Tohunga, striving to find courage to follow the example of the crowds who were jumping the life to come. "Ah!" groaned he, "so I have met the catastrophe the stars have lately predicted; yet, this is not the ill which it is foretold the sea is to bring to Maoria; no, this thing, which is of the earth, is contemptible and of no account, compared to the evils which the approach of death discloses to me, and which I see will accompany the advent of a race who will utterly destroy the Maoris, and leave fewer vestiges of us than we have left of the naked moa hunters."

"Why should I hesitate to go," he continued, as Tui and Matuku passed him on their unknown journey, so absorbed in one another that they saw him not; "I who have enjoyed all that this life can give, until I have become satiated with existence and its pleasures, when the young and the brave, with life all before them, depart without hesitation?"

The triumphant shouts of the victors cut short the moralising of the Tohunga.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

NOTES.

1. (*Page* 23.)

Karakia, incantations.—In their use of this word the Maoris had no idea of prayer, and it is a mistake to attach that meaning to *karakia*.

The author once heard a genuine *karakia*. He was travelling with a party of Maoris who were equally anxious with himself to cross the great lake of Taupo, upon the northern bank of which the weather had detained the party for nearly a week. The residents of the place had not been long converted to Christianity (it was in the early days of the colony), of which they were such strict professors that they would allow no food to be prepared on Sunday. A slight improvement in the weather having taken place, a large canoe was launched, and left the shore, paddled by a full crew of men and women. The canoe was less than two miles from the land when she was struck by three successive seas, which half filled her with water; a fourth would have swamped and turned her over. The panic-stricken crew threw down their paddles,

Digitized by Google

which floated about the canoe, and uttered cries of, "O Rama! (the chief who had persuaded them to start) O Rama! you were mad." "He Taniwha! he Taniwha! A water monster, a water monster." At last some of them called upon an old woman who was in the stern of the canoe to save them by a *karakia*. When she commenced, the cries of alarm ceased, and, the strength of the squall having probably passed away, the canoe shipped no more water. The crew took heart, bailed her out, and with all possible speed regained the shore. This is the only occasion upon which the author has had the advantage of seeing a *taniwha*, or of hearing a genuine *karakia*. The Maoris still believe in and practice incantations, but the latter hardly ever in the presence of Europeans, unless by way of a joke, or upon an occasion not more serious than a fishing excursion.

---

2. (*Page* 26.)

A veritable "Pakeha Maori," or European Maori, whose name is legibly written in the brief history of New Zealand, and who was on board the first ship that ever entered the harbour of Kawhia, now the marine residence of the Maori king, and where it was almost death for an European to show himself, described to the writer a Maori *séance* at which he was once present.

He remained in Kawhia, and married a Maori girl. His half-caste child was the first born in that part of the island, and was, consequently, much thought of. When between two and three years old the child, a little girl, died, and the mother took the loss greatly to heart. She was pining away, when the

Digitized by Google

Tohunga of the tribe announced that the spirit of the child had returned to earth to comfort her mother. The *séance* much resembled the one we have described. Upon the writer asking the Pakeha Maori whether he supposed that the Tohunga was a ventriloquist, he replied that "he did not know, for he had never heard one." He appeared to be hurt at the question, and to have really believed in the Tohunga.

---

3. (*Page* 35.)

Tapu or *taboo.*—This word denoted prohibition; it is, therefore, a mistake to give it a religious signification, and translate it holy or sacred, or under a religious interdict, for it meant nothing of the kind. A betrothed woman was *tapu*, or if a ruling chief thought that a bed of shell-fish was being overworked, he declared it *tapu*, etc.

---

4. (*Page* 72.)

The old Maori feeling which numbered prisoners amongst the dead is not yet extinct. In 1864, soon after the British troops had conquered and occupied Waikato, the writer, when travelling on the west coast, chanced, in the course of conversation with a nominally friendly chief, to mention that he had seen the Chief Te Ori-ori, who had been taken prisoner at Rangi-riri, but who had been allowed to live in the town of Auckland on his parole, as he had saved several European lives. The reply was, "You are very wrong to say that you have seen Te Ori-ori; he is dead."

Digitized by Google

5. (*Page* 115.)

This incident occurred in a duel fought in the neighbourhood of the author's house; it is the only occasion upon which he has known a Maori to show the white feather when under arms.

---

6. (*Page* 135.)

A similar death occurred under the author's notice, precisely as here related. On another occasion he recollects hearing of a young Maori woman, when returning home in the dusk of the evening from a settler's house, being alarmed by a cow rising out of the fern. She reached her home much frightened, saying that she had seen a spirit. Her friends went to the place where she had been alarmed, and found a white cow, but it was impossible to pacify her; she had received a shock from which she died after a short illness. The reputed wizard who was supposed to have caused the death of Ora's prototype in the manner related, was not put to death, being a person of great rank; but the Maori war deprived him of his appointment of guardian of the great weir at the celebrated eel lake, and, if alive, he is now practising his arts of eel catching and witchcraft at the Court of the Maori King. The tragedy of strangling a supposed wizard and witch occurred a few years ago, six miles from the writer's house. Two old people, man and wife, who were accused of having bewitched, and thereby killed a son of the Maori magistrate of the district, who was in the receipt of a salary of £150 per annum from Government to keep him in good humour, were with the full consent of the tribe put to death in the manner related. The writer, feeling a natural dislike to such an atrocity being

Digitized by Google

perpetrated with impunity within sight of his own door, fully reported the matter to the Government, but received no reply. He was, however, given to understand that the authorities thought it in bad taste to notice the affair, and that the native minister, Mr. Donald McLean, was doubly opposed to inquiry being made into the matter. From a public point of view, he considered that the treaty of Waitangi ensured the natives the peaceful enjoyment of their rights and privileges, including the power of life and death to the chiefs; moreover, as a Highland gentleman, he had a great admiration for the native magistrate, as a very distinguished Maori warrior, for whom he had obtained a pension of £150 per annum, which an inquiry into the strangling and burning might have placed in jeopardy. There being no public opinion in the province of Auckland (it is otherwise in the southern provinces) the matter was hushed up.

---

7. (*Page* 146.)

The Secrecy of the Maoris.

Two traditional instances are given of the tribal secrecy of the Maoris, but they are insignificant when compared to the national secret of their intended rising for the extermination of the European immigrants.

In 1853 the distrust caused by the rapid increase of the Europeans had become general throughout the island, and the centre and south came to the resolution to stem the current, and drive back "the tide of Pakehas." The north of the island, having been roughly handled in a former war, waited to see the success of the national movement.

The first step taken was the determination to sell no more

Digitized by Google

land, and the second was to establish a king in the centre of the island. The third was more difficult. In the year 1845, the Governor, Sir George, then Captain Grey, had prohibited the sale of arms and ammunition to the Maoris; and in 1853, when they commenced to agitate for the repeal of this, to them, obnoxious law, they were in point of fact disarmed; those who were not so being possessed of only a few fowling-pieces and old flint muskets. Immediately upon the arrival of Colonel Thomas Brown, the successor of Sir George Grey, the Maoris commenced to agitate for the repeal of the Arms Act, and the refrain of the song they ever sang in the ears of Colonel Brown was, "Oh, friend, the Governor! give us (let us buy) guns and powder to shoot pigeons." Perseverance was as usual successful, and the Arms Act was repealed in 1857. Even the astounding quantities of arms and ammunition purchased by the Maoris upon the repeal of the Act, failed to open the eyes of Government; and the two persons most capable of forming an opinion of the intentions of the Maoris, and of rightly estimating their high military organization, were treated as alarmists. No single instance is upon record of a European being warned by the Maoris of what they considered the impending fate of every white man upon the island, until after the Government, in the blindest ignorance of what it was doing, had already inaugurated the war of races.

In 1860 the Government began the struggle upon a frivolous pretext. A chief at Taranaki refused his consent to the sale of some land, which a few of his tribe, in consequence of a dispute, wished to sell, and Government entered upon a contest with him in childish ignorance of the nature of the conflict it had precipitated. As the war was commenced before the Maori preparations were complete, our luck saved us from yet more dire misfortunes than actually befel us, as it did in India

Digitized by Google

in 1857, when the mutiny burst forth before the preparations of the conspirators were perfected.

The only excuse for the fatuous ignorance of the New Zealand Ministry, is that they were mostly residents in the other island, and knew no more about the north island and the Maoris than the members of the Parliament which sits at Westminster. So crass was the obtuseness of the Stafford-Richmond Ministry, that they made the Governor write a despatch to the Colonial Secretary, the late Duke of Newcastle, saying that "twenty men and a block-house" would coerce the Taranaki Chief, William King; that is to say, the whole Maori nation. Yet the 10,000 Imperial and 5000 colonial troops, who at one time were in the field, met with very indifferent success. An idea of the scale of the Maori preparations may be formed from the fact that after the commencement of the war, and the re-enactment of the prohibition of the sale of arms, a single trader, a well-known Pakeha Maori, had sufficient interest to get out of bond in Auckland two tons of gunpowder, which he alleged he had sold to the tribe he lived amongst at Hokianga. Upon the meeting of the New Zealand Parliament in Auckland in 1860, a commission was appointed, under the name of "the Waikato Committee," to inquire into the conditions of the native people, whose existence the Government had almost ignored, or whom they had looked upon as beings of no higher an order than Australian aborigines, and whom they had treated accordingly.

The Report of the Committee was printed upon 165 pages of closely-printed long-foolscap paper, and its value may be estimated from its having "adopted, as the basis of its conclusions," the report of Mr. Fenton (ex-Waikato trader and customs officer), and his Journal of Proceedings as Resident Magistrate in the Waikato, in the years 1857–58. It demonstrated, to

Digitized by Google

its own satisfaction, that the system jointly recommended by the Governor and the Responsible Advisers of the Crown was calculated to effect that great desideratum, "the elevation of the mere Maori into the reasoning citizen."

Mr. Strauss, an Austrian gentleman, possessed of great knowledge of Maori affairs, tendered the Committee a letter he had written to Government in 1857, and which deserves to be rescued from oblivion :—

"Waipa, May 18th, 1857.

"Sir,—I do not know in what light the Government does look upon the present ferment amongst the natives of this Island, but I do clearly see that it will eventually end in a direful visitation of God upon it; so I consider that every information relating to these affairs ought to be given to Government, in order that these events may not overtake the European settlements in a state of careless ignorance.

"Potatan has been made king by the concourse of half the Island, and by the wish of the native population of the whole of it, those few exceptions (tribes here and there apparently not consenting to it) being a mere measure of deceit, a feint which will be abandoned in the course of events.

"The foundation of the kingship is to sell no more land to the Europeans, and to allow no public roads to pass the native territory. How impossible it is for this colony to prosper, or even to exist, if these measures are carried out, is self-apparent! Natives hoarding millions of acres of land of which they can and will make no use; New Zealand compelled to check immigration for want of a location for new-comers. Besides, criminals will, in future, be quite secured from legal prosecution by taking refuge under the wings of this new sovereign in the interior.

Digitized by Google

"Pride will uphold and strengthen this king. Ignorance will unavoidably involve him in collisions with us; and covetousness will lead these cannibal hordes to bloodshed and slaughter.

"I am, etc.,

"C. STRAUSS.

"To the Resident Magistrate, Waikato."

The Governor and his Ministers not only rejected the idea of taking precautions, but in the end of that year repealed the Arms Act, the then Native Minister, Mr. Donald McLean, being of opinion that "the present movement among the Waikato tribes of electing a king of their own, is not likely to be attended with any important or serious consequences, if the Government abstain from interfering in the matter."

Ten years passed away, and in 1870 the same politicians who in 1860 were "elevating the mere Maori into a reasoning citizen," were (at the point of the bayonet) still engaged in the process.

After the Government had commenced the war in 1860, a very old Maori friend of the author, one of the characters drawn in this little book, entreated him to leave the Island, assuring him that the Maoris would kill every white man, woman, and child. Of their ability to do so, they at that time entertained not the slightest doubt, saying, "The Governor has set fire to the fern at Taranaki, and the smoke will cover the whole Island."

THE END.

PRINTED BY TAYLOR AND CO.,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OC.POLY. J 65
Maoria. A sketch of the manners and
Tozzer Library
AWY8958
3 2044 043 284 223

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google